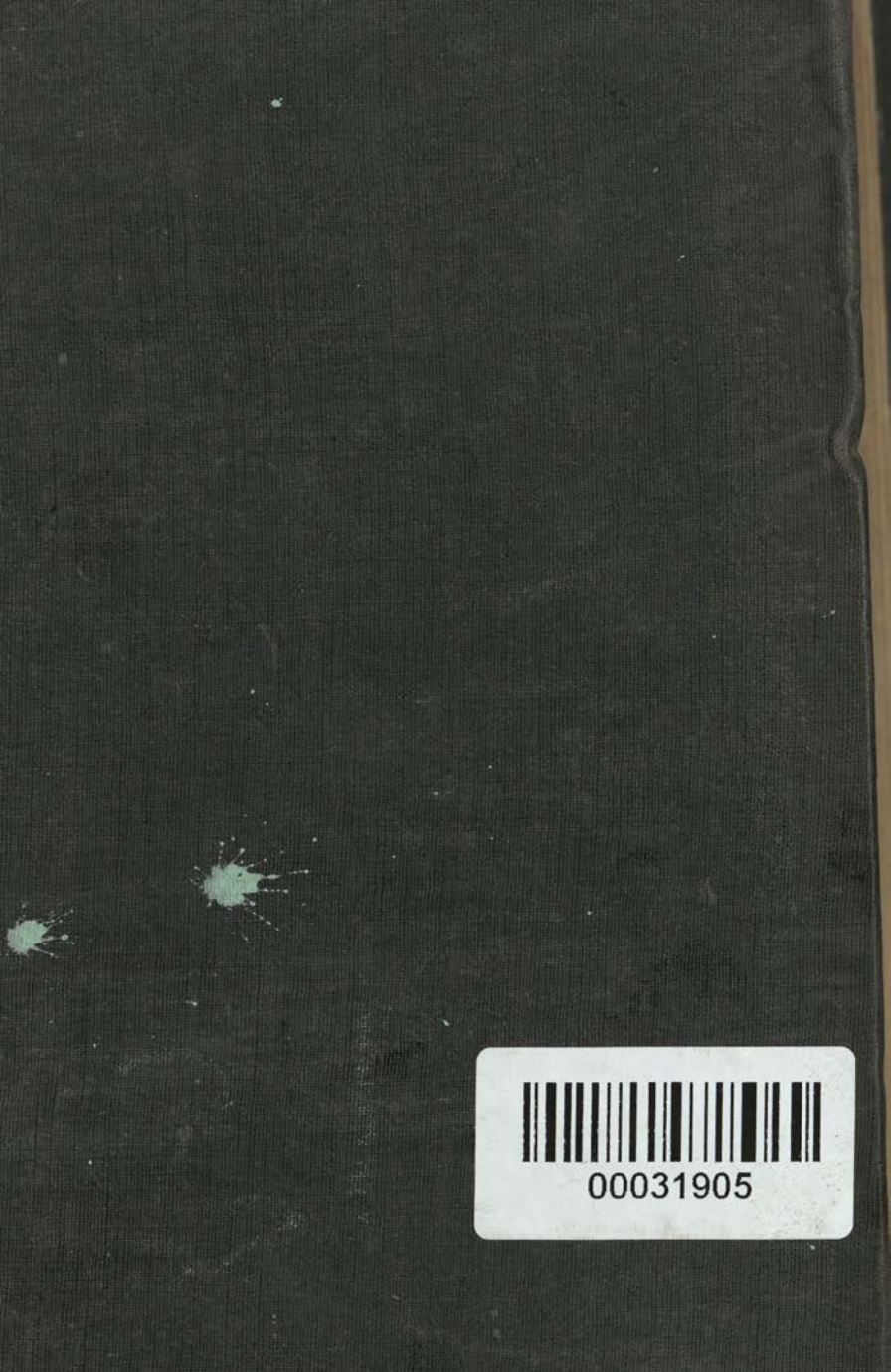
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"False witnesses did rise up: they laid to my charge things that I knew not." Psalm XXXV. 11.

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INCLUDING

THE DEFENCE OF

MARY STUART

31605

BY

JOHN SKELTON

LL.D. (EDIN.), ADVOCATE

AUTHOR OF "RUGÆ CRITICÆ," "A CAMPAIGNER AT HOME," AND OTHER "ESSAYS OF SHIRLEY"

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5

SOME LAST WORDS:

BY WAY OF PREFACE

LIBRARY OF THE BOMBAY BRANCH OF THE ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY

SOME LAST WORDS

BY WAY OF PREFACE.

—o—

THE VOLUME in which the Defence of Mary Stuart originally appeared went out of print a few weeks after it was published, and is now scarce and dear. I would have reprinted it at the time, but for one consideration. The speech of an Advocate is always open to the observation that it is—the speech of an Advocate. This rather recondite reflection had been expanded by more than one of my critics, who held that a tone of partisanship was thus given to what was in substance an unimpassioned and impartial "summing up." I would have liked, therefore, to have turned the argument into a less forensic channel,—to have made it a charge from the Bench rather than a pleading from the Bar. But the experiments I tried were not satisfactory; I found that a change of form involved radical reconstruction; and for that I had neither time nor patience. It is now reprinted almost exactly as it was written. One or two new paragraphs, however, have been introduced, and there are many additional notes.

A very pleasant incident (I may be permitted to add) is connected with the publication of the Speech for the

Queen. We had been wandering among those delightful valleys which drain into the Traun and the Salza; we had been at Ischl and were going to Berchtesgaden; and were now again for a few hours in Salzburg to pick up our letters and spend another night in the cool vaulted chambers of the Erzherzog Carl—like the Drei Mohren at Augsburg or the Goldenes Kreuz at Regensburg, a medieval hostelry.[1] Among our letters from Scotland was one which contained the gratifying intelligence that the Queen had been reading with interest and sympathy the Defence of Mary Stuart, and proposed to procure a copy for the Royal library. As the volume was out of print, I requested permission to send one of the two or three copies which I had retained—a request which was graciously acceded to. In the letter intimating that the volume had been received, it was stated: "The Queen desires me to write and thank you for your Defence of Mary Queen of Scots, and is most happy to have it, affording as it does conclusive evidence of the innocence of poor Queen Mary of the terrible crimes so cruelly and unjustly laid to her charge. The Queen was most interested last year in your Defence, and is pleased now to accept the record of it that you send her Majesty." The students of history, who believe that justice, full justice, has not yet been done to the most remarkable woman of her age, are, I think, daily increasing; and I have therefore ventured to refer to an incident which shows how keen and intelligent an interest is felt in Mary Stuart by the Royal Lady who wears Mary

[1] The spirit of "progress" is ravaging the old German towns. The Drei Mohren at Augsburg has been transformed into a grand new hotel; and the fine old walls have been levelled and replaced by a second-hand second-rate Parisian boulevard. The Goldenes Kreuz of Regensburg, where Don John of Austria was born—the fair hostess, Barbara Blumberg, being the hero's mother—is not much changed since Charles V. was there in 1546; but the rest of the town has begun to be modernised. Only Nürnberg is intact.

Stuart's crown,—a happier and more fortunate Queen of Scotland.

I have obtained Mr Froude's permission to print the interesting letters which he wrote me on the subject of the Defence. What I have to urge in reply will be found at page 76.

"HOLM PARK, ASHBURTON,
September 15.

"MY DEAR SKELTON,—You may as well send your MS. to the printer (Spottiswoode & Co., New Street Square). I shall look for what you say with great anxiety, but I am rather sorry that you address yourself only to the stock arguments. You consider, I suppose, that I have not added to their weight. I could only give what weighed with me—the impossibility that any trick could have been practised which should not have been seen through by Cecil, Walsingham, Knox, the French Court, the Spanish Court, the whole of Europe; and the further possibility that men in Cecil and Walsingham's position would have sanctioned such a trick, or that the rest of Catholic Europe would not have protested against it. I have never seen the slightest serious attempt to meet the position. I have often heard it spoken of with contempt, but never considered, and it is simply everything from my own point of view. The details are known to us only in fragments,—much is utterly lost, which was too familiar to the whole world at the time to be mentioned by anybody. The contemporary conviction of a competent judge (if you can be assured of his probity) is worth cartloads of Hosack conjecture. Anyway, however, I shall be delighted to read what you say. I observe that a German Professor announces a book, the result of ten years' labour, which is to contain a triumphant and final refutation of the calumnies against the Queen.

"Be this what it may, I have said my say, and shall return to my vomit no more. The only thing which I fancy would really convince me, would be a discovery of some paper of Maitland telling how the plot was got up.

"Maitland knew the whole,—if any one in the world knew. Maitland, though devoted to Mary, died and made no sign. Study Maitland's character. Scotland never produced a more

remarkable, or in some aspects, more interesting man. Explain his silence, if you can. . . . Ever yours most truly,

"J. A. FROUDE."

"HOLM, *October* 2.

"MY DEAR SKELTON,—I have read the Article. What shall I say? At any rate that it will be a high credit to *Fraser*. But you do not touch on any one of the points which weigh most with me. It may be easy to you to suppose men like Burghley, or Walsingham, or John Knox, to have been accomplices in a forgery. It is to me impossible. You can account to yourself for the acquiescence of the Catholic world, French, Spaniards, Pope, and the rest, in the defamation of Mary Stuart. Knowing as I do that she was the very hinge on which the fortunes of the Catholic Church revolved, that all their hopes were wrapped up in her, and that to have proved her innocent if they could, or even to have asserted her innocence before Europe, and defied Elizabeth to prove her guilty, would have been a matter of perfectly transcendent importance to them, their utter silence about it for ten years is to me utterly inexplicable on any hypothesis but one.

"You cannot argue a question of the kind in detail from the fragments of evidence which survive. Read only the Duke of Norfolk's trial. You will find innumerable things mentioned, or alluded to, of which we know nothing. Walsingham writes to Cecil before the Westminster inquiry, that if evidence was wanted *separate from* the 'Casket Letters,' he had persons ready to come forward and prove the Queen of Scots' guilt. Who are they? We cannot tell. But Walsingham was one of the greatest statesmen, perhaps the very greatest, in Europe.

"You speak of Lethington as a person who might have forged the letters, and doubtless, if the letters were forged, he knew by whom it was done. Now, consider Lethington's later life. He devoted himself soul and body to the Queen of Scots' interest. He married one of her Marys. He was the person whom evidently she *trusted* more completely than any one else in Scotland. Can you seriously suppose that she would have thrown herself on the support of the man whom she knew to have forged her handwriting to prove her a murderess, and thus to have been

the cause of all her misery? Can you seriously suppose that Maitland would have allowed a secret to die with him which, if told, would have overwhelmed the enemies of the cause to which he had devoted himself with instant infamy?

"I do not hesitate to say that if any definite proof could have been produced that the letters were forgeries, Elizabeth's throne would not have been worth a month's purchase.

"You *cannot* judge a question of this kind fairly without knowing the political relation of things. It vexes me to see so much pains taken, so much critical acuteness, so much high talent expended in the handling of particular points, and conjecturing explanations of them, while the grounds on which the serious judgment must rest are never approached at all.

"Ill arranged as this world is, I am happy to believe that mankind, in these western parts at least, are not idiots enough to allow a crime so enormous as the dethroning and imprisoning Mary Stuart to be perpetrated with success, if she had not deserved it. Such secrets come out at last, and due punishment follows.—Ever yours,

"J. A. F."

Less than a year ago, the note of warning which I had ventured to sound—viz., that the apologists who maintain that Mary was absolutely blameless in the matter of Darnley, make the case against her hopelessly strong—was enforced with characteristic vehemence by Mr Swinburne.[1] Mr Swinburne admires Mary immensely; but the gist of his argument is, that unless she committed murder and adultery she is unworthy of admiration. Folly and cowardice are more criminal than murder and adultery; and if Mary did not commit murder and adultery, she was a fool and a coward. To my own mind neither alternative is satisfactory,—the more I examine the evidence, the more firmly am I convinced that the true solution of the riddle is that which I have offered.

[1] *Fortnightly Review*, January 1882. Note on the character of Mary Queen of Scots. By A. C. Swinburne.

A brave and brilliant woman was caught in the net which her own rashness as well as the malignity of her enemies had woven; and, though her heart never failed her, though she struggled on with undaunted spirit to the end, she could never free herself from the toils. But (after all is said that can be said) the "Casket Letters" are the key to the situation. If the "Casket Letters" were letters addressed by Mary to Bothwell, she is undoubtedly guilty; if the "Casket Letters" were an invention of the enemy, the indictment simply collapses. And the argument against the authenticity of these extraordinary documents is—so far as I can judge—unanswerable and conclusive.

It may be, and probably is, prejudice on my part; but it certainly seems to me that Mr Swinburne's Mary Stuart is not one of the masterpieces of that facile and brilliant Muse. Our "youngest singer" has failed, whether in prose or poetry, to furnish us with a consistent and credible interpretation of her strange career. I sometimes fancy, on the other hand, that what may be called the modern conception of her character finds in the Medea of Mr Morris's *Jason* singularly close and faithful poetical expression. Poetry may sometimes be permitted to come to the aid of history; and when dealing with such a complex creature as Mary undoubtedly was, any aid that it can give us is welcome. Medea's is a nature in which the sweet and bitter have been perversely mixed. A rare vein of soft seductive sweetness and mischief and treachery runs through a character which, in its union of intellectual coolness with devastating passion, is curiously like that which an illustrious historian has ascribed to Mary Stuart. She uses without a blush the stealthy arts with which nature arms the weaker animals; but for Love she can heroically dare. Love apart, she might fitly, as her sorceress kinswoman told her—

"have seen
The fashion of the foolish world go by
And drunk the cup of power and majesty."

But even in possession she is hardly happy; her love is touched by a subtle and prescient sadness; from its birth she sees far off the fate that awaits it:—

"Upon the day thou weariest of me,
I wish that thou mayst somewhat think of this,
And 'twixt thy new-found kisses, and the bliss
Of something sweeter than the old delight,
Remember thee a little of this night
Of marvels, and this starlit, silent place,
And these two lovers standing face to face."

Swinburne and Morris! It seems but the other day since their juvenile poems were sent me by—Dante Gabriel Rossetti; and now Rossetti is gone—leaving his own work only half done. I was one of the two or three friends who were familiar with his poems before they were gathered together into a volume,—their publication being partly owing, indeed, to my urgent entreaties that he would give to all what had so charmed a few. So he writes me in a letter now lying beside me, dated from that old Chelsea studio where the pleasantest of London days were spent. [But when I knew him first, the studio was somewhere about Blackfriars Bridge, high over the busy river; and what a man of men he was then!][1]

[1] Rossetti was a lively letter-writer: and, now that he is gone, one or two of his letters—which I have chanced to preserve—may interest the readers of his poetry.

"16 CHEYNE WALK, CHELSEA, 13*th March* 1865.

"MY DEAR SKELTON,—I shall be very happy to see your friend whenever she is able to call. My best hour is towards dusk, when the day's work is over, or else at about 11 A.M. But then or not then I shall welcome her visit.

"I fear I have given you reason to think me obtuse, and not sharp-sighted enough to see through a 'West Highland' fog. But I did

Wellnigh thirty years ago, when he was little known, I said of him in *Thalatta* that he was even then one of our greatest artists; and in spite of obvious drawbacks, defects of drawing and the like, I retain the conviction which I then expressed. Save Millais only, he is our most superb colourist; and for moral force and spiritual impressiveness he stands alone. The same may be said of his verse,—his poems are almost without exception products of the high poetic faculty, in some of its highest and

though,—indeed it was 'Isabel' who tipped me a wink through the mist. Only I have been so busy lately that I have not had time to acknowledge your kind present of the little volume.

"The said 'Isabel' is among my favourites. I am not sure, but she almost seems shorter to me than when I last saw her, and, strangely enough, not to her detriment. 'Easter Bells' is one of the most striking pieces, and 'Whither?' one of the most sustained in measure and manner. 'My Dove-cot' and 'Rosamond' are, I think, equal to these; and I do not know that there is anything better in the gathering than (in their own way) 'A Song for May' and 'Soap Bubbles for Baby.' I am glad you have collected all these, and am sure it is the way to do more.

"Do write something concerning Swinburne. You will find his 'Atalanta' a most noble thing, never surpassed, to my thinking. I hope you will be in town during Madox Brown's admirable exhibition, and should like to visit it in your company. I am sure his *Catalogue Raisonnée* must interest you much.

"My sister Christina will soon have a new volume out.—With kind remembrances, I am, yours ever truly, D. G. ROSSETTI."

"16 CHEYNE WALK, CHELSEA, *7th Feb.* 1860.

"MY DEAR SKELTON,—The *Fraser* containing your article on Morris has been sent me,—doubtless through the same kind remembrance of me on your part which is apparent in the article itself.

"I think all you say of Morris is very completely and excellently said. It indicates, I should say, on the whole, the same estimate of him which I have long entertained, as being—all things considered—the greatest literary identity of our time. I say this chiefly on the ground of that highest quality in a poet—his width of relation to the mass of mankind; for in inexhaustible splendour of execution, who can stand beside Swinburne?—not to speak of older men.

"You know Morris is now only 35, and has done things in decorative art which take as high and exclusive a place in that field as his poetry does in its own. What may he not yet do? The second volume of the *Earthly Paradise* is getting forward, but will not be ready, I

most intense moods. As a translator he is unrivalled. The translation of the *Vita Nuova* shows, perhaps, the most sustained power; but in rendering the difficult and brilliant trifles of the lesser Italian poets—most arduous of any to a translator—Rossetti achieved his most remarkable success. The impressive effect of a massive work of art may be conveyed to a foreign reader, even through the medium of an indifferent translation; but when the whole excellence of a poem lies in its dexterity

should think, till the spring of next year. In some parts of it the poet goes deeper in the treatment of intense personal passion than he has yet done. After this work is finished, I trust his next step will be in dramatic composition, in which I foresee some of his highest triumphs.

"What you say of me comes curiously at a moment when a spell of ill health has limited my painting, and thrown me back a little on old poetic ideas. I fear I shall find, on examination, that there is not much of the MSS. I lost (a biggish vol., ready for the press) which can be got together again. There will be some sonnets of mine in the *Fortnightly Review* next month. I shall probably write some new things, and see whether they seem worth anything among such poets as we have now.—Ever yours, D. G. ROSSETTI."

The passage to which Rossetti refers is the following: "The first work of William Morris, *The Defence of Guinevere, and other Poems*, was dedicated to a great, though little known artist: 'To my friend, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Painter, I dedicate these poems.' The earliest work of Algernon Charles Swinburne bore the same name: 'Affectionately inscribed to Dante Gabriel Rossetti.' Mr Rossetti's translations from the Italian poets are well known to all lovers of poetry. They are the most truthful of transcripts, and yet manifest at the same time a strong imaginative originality. To that work an announcement was appended which excited eager expectation: 'Shortly will be published, *Dante in Verona, and other Poems*, by D. G. Rossetti.' Ten years have elapsed, and the work is still unpublished. It is said that an accident befell the manuscript; but surely, from the rough drafts that Mr Rossetti must possess, the poems might even yet be recovered and put together. Even in this prolific age the world can ill afford to lose a volume which would undoubtedly prove a substantial addition to its poetic literature. At all events, Mr Rossetti's painted works are in existence; and until these are brought together, and publicly exhibited, the English lovers of art will not rightly understand that one of the most consummate colourists since Titian is at this moment at work among us."—*Fraser's Magazine*, Feb. 1869, p. 235.

and adroitness of movement, in the delicacy of its form and the fragility of its workmanship, a translation is absolutely worthless unless the translator's hand be as light, trenchant, and dexterous as the hand of the man who wrote the original. These delicious trifles, these fitful emanations of the fancy, are apt to suffer irreparable injury when rudely handled. Yet how well Rossetti succeeded! This is a sonnet by Boccaccio:—

"OF THREE GIRLS AND OF THEIR TALK.

"By a clear well, within a little field,
Full of green grass and flowers of every hue,
Sat three young girls, relating (as I knew)
Their loves. And each had twined a bough to shield
Her lovely face; and the green leaves did yield
The golden hair their shadow; while the two
Sweet colours mingled, both blown lightly through
With a soft wind for ever stirr'd and still'd.
After a little while one of them said,
(I heard her) 'Think! If, ere the next hour struck,
Each of our lovers should come here to-day,
Think you that we should fly or feel afraid?'
To whom the others answered, 'From such luck
A girl would be a fool to run away.'"

The only articles in this volume which I have reprinted at length are those on Mary Stuart, Lord Bolingbroke, Mr Canning, and Lord Beaconsfield. The other papers are more of the nature of selected extracts,—passages into which is condensed whatever appeared most characteristic of the genius or most idiomatic in the life. They were directed for the most part against what I held to be popular misconceptions,—not a few of them being protests uttered at the moment against the sweeping rhetoric and confident verdicts of Lord Macaulay. As pleas in arrest of judgment addressed to a Court of Review, they have thus, more or less, a common character and design. Many of the names which in after-ages

will be most closely associated with the permanent fame of England are now under a cloud, and much of what is most noble in our annals is identified with a losing cause. Whether the conception of national life which is embodied in the Shakespearian drama, or the conception of national life which is embodied in the Peace Society and the Birmingham Caucus, most closely approaches the ideal Commonwealth of the philosopher, I do not pretend to determine; but it is at least undeniable that the famous England of the past was reared and nurtured upon traditions whose echoes are growing dull. Lord Beaconsfield was among the last of our statesmen who represented this earlier and (as some deem it) Greater Britain; and in spite of his intense idiosyncracies, the kinship with Halifax, and Bolingbroke, and Chatham, and Pitt, and Canning, was distinctly recognisable.

Lord Beaconsfield is a tempting subject for the critic: but it is difficult for those who have been subjugated by his unique personality to use the language of criticism. More than thirty years have passed since, at our University Debating Societies, the character of Disraeli formed one of the stock subjects of controversy. The speeches of the majority of the members reflected the tone of the outside world, which was then ferociously unfair. Mr Disraeli was being assailed from all sides: the Peelites were furious at the free lance who had driven them from office; the Whigs dimly recognised that a great and resolute will was marshalling the forces of their hereditary foes, and were bitter, in their icy way, against the plebeian chief who threatened their monopoly of power; the Tory squires eyed him suspiciously, and accorded him a languid and half-hearted support; the magnates of the newspaper press rudely ridiculed the political "adventurer" who had once wielded a pen. But at that time Mr Disraeli was to *us* (there were not more than half-a-dozen of us, all

told, if I remember rightly) what Thackeray was to Charlotte Brontë when to him, before the days of his fame, she dedicated *Jane Eyre;* — we detected in him "an intellect profounder and more unique than his contemporaries have yet recognised." The smaller the sect the warmer the zeal; and the devotion which, through many disastrous years, a small band of true believers offered to Mr Disraeli may have gained in intensity because we were *few*. There is a perilous delight in flinging one's self, heart and soul, into a losing cause, which the martyr at least can appreciate. Then, as we followed each other into the bigger world outside the college quadrangle, we carried our "testimony" along with us—the gospel according to Dizzy, as they called it in those days. Most of us could do but little for the good cause, as we esteemed it. An occasional leader in a provincial journal, an occasional article in a London monthly—that was about the limit of our resources; though one of our number, to be sure, secured a wider influence and a larger audience; and I sometimes fancy that the change of tone and feeling which, al[most] 1858, was perceptible in the Thunderer himself, is t[o be] traced to the fact that a comrade, who had been ra[pidly] admitted within the temple, was then ministering at [the] altars. [Poor D——! He has gone over to the maj[ority] in far from triumphal fashion. By no fault of his [own] it may be; for at best it is a hard life, and the rew[ards] of letters are even more uncertain than those of politi[cs] war. *Spes et præmia in ambiguo; certa, funera et luc[tus]*

My own share in this new crusade was of course slight, yet it brought out to the full, in all sorts of pl[easa]nt and gracious ways, the generous nature of the r[eader]. As the years wore on, the scattered papers took sh[ape] and consistency; and at last, during 1862, in what [was] called a "political romance," much that had been sai[d] us in glorification of our leader in *Fraser* and elsewh[ere]

was presented in concrete form to the public. "Mowbray" was the real hero of this "political romance;" and Mowbray was Disraeli under a thin disguise. Some of the pages devoted to him are yet, I think, vitally recognisable,—whereas the rest of it, after brief popularity, has long since fallen dead. Originally published in *Fraser's Magazine* during 1862, the papers were collected towards the end of the year into a presentable volume, to which a preface was prefixed. Therein it was intimated by the author that the age of dedications, like the age of chivalry, had departed. "Had these pretty solemnities," it went on, "been still in fashion, I should have ventured to inscribe a political story to Mr Disraeli; not merely because loyalty to one's leader is the first and most neglected of political virtues; not merely because that leader is to us in England what Tully was to his countrymen in Rome—*optimus omnium patronus;* but because I recognise in him, when dealing with social and religious controversies, a breadth of aim and generosity of sentiment which I do not find in his opponents, and which comprise the best and most sterling elements of Liberalism." We were informed at the time that Mr Disraeli was quite pleased with the devotional attitude which the book and the preface together expressed; and certainly, in the graceful little note which accepted the dedication (if it was a dedication), there is no hint that any fault was found with the portrait that had been limned:—

"TORQUAY, *Dec.* 28, 1862.

"DEAR SIR,—I am honoured and I am gratified by the dedication of *Thalatta*.

"I entirely sympathise with the object of the work, which gracefully develops a tone of thought and sentiment on the prevalence of which the continued greatness of this country depends.—Believe me, Your obliged Servant,

"B. DISRAELI."

There are one or two other letters to which I may here without impropriety refer,—one, especially, which throws a curiously direct light upon certain ambiguous incidents of his life. In an article in *Fraser* for May 1864, the controversy between Lord Macaulay and Earl Stanhope (when Lord Mahon) had furnished the text for a discourse on the historical antecedents of our political parties.[1]

This is the commentary by Mr Disraeli,—which, as I have said, is very curious and interesting:—

"GROSVENOR GATE, *May* 16, 1864.

"DEAR SIR,—I thank you for your article, which I received this morning. I read your criticisms always with interest,

[1] Lord Stanhope afterwards pointed out to me that I had not followed the controversy to its close. "Allow me also to assure you," he wrote, on March 18, 1868, "of the gratification with which a year or two since I read the 'Campaigner at Home.' I was only sorry that you had omitted from that interesting series of chapters the one which I had read as an article in *Fraser* as to the transmutation of the Whig and Tory parties, the controversy carried on, now thirty-five years ago, between my lamented friend Lord Macaulay and myself. Your discussion of it was, I thought, very good; and it would have been better still if you had followed it to its final close. For, if you will now refer to Lord Macaulay's second article on Lord Chatham, as published in the *Edinburgh Review*, October 1841, and since collected in his Essays, you will find from the opening passages—enforced by a most ingenious illustration from Dante's 'Malebolge'—that Lord Macaulay's opinion of the point at issue had come to be very nearly the same as mine. I ask pardon for having so long detained you."

I had forgotten at the moment when the text was written, that the article of May 1864 was one of the "Campaigner at Home" series—a series which, when republished, elicited another letter from Mr Disraeli, in which there is a pleasant glimpse of life at Hughenden—the reference to Mrs Disraeli, "the most severe of critics but a perfect wife," being habitual and characteristic.

"HUGHENDEN MANOR, *July* 31, 1865.

"MY DEAR SIR,—I am obliged to address you in your mask, for I cannot put my hand upon your letter, and therefore have lost your direction.

"Mrs Disraeli is reading your 'Campaigner at Home,' and gave me last evening a most charming description of it.

"We brought it with us into the country. I was not surprised at her account, for I am well aware of the graceful fancies of your picturesque pen.—Yours very faithfully, B. DISRAELI."

because they are discriminative, and are founded on knowledge and thought.

"These qualities are rarer in the present day than the world imagines. Everybody writes in a hurry, and the past seems quite obliterated from public memory.

"I need not remind you that Parliamentary Reform was a living question with the Tories for the quarter of a century, at least, that followed the Revolution of 1688. Not only Sir William Wyndham and his friends were in favour of annual parliaments and universal suffrage, but Sir John Hinde Cotton even advocated the ballot. These were desperate remedies against Whig supremacy. It appeared to me in 1832 that the Reform Act was another 1688, and that influenced my conduct when I entered public life. I don't say this to vindicate my course, but to explain it.

"So, also, I looked then—as I look now—to a reconciliation between the Tory party and the Roman Catholic subjects of the Queen. This led, thirty years ago, and more, to the O'Connell affair, but I have never relinquished my purpose; and have now, I hope, nearly accomplished it.

"If the Tory party is not a national party, it is nothing.

"Pardon this egotism, which I trust, however, is not my wont, and believe me, dear Sir, with respect, faithfully yours,

"B. DISRAELI."

I have said enough to show the cordial relations which Mr Disraeli maintained with *outsiders*,—with men, I mean, who were neither in, nor of, the parliamentary world; and it may be added that this pleasant facility of intercourse was maintained to the end. Just a year before he went out of office for the last time, a little *brochure* on the fierce philippics that were being directed against his "criminal" foreign policy elicited a word or two of graceful thanks:—

"HUGHENDEN MANOR, *Jan.* 6, 1879.

"MY DEAR SIR,—It is capital; and worthy of the good old days of the Rolliad and the Anti-Jacobin.—Yours faithfully and much obliged, BEACONSFIELD."

An Essay on Local History—Lord Crawford and the House of Mar[1]—which I had hoped to include, must, for want of space, be reserved for another volume. Not only is the history of Mar as picturesque and fascinating as a romance, but Lord Crawford himself was a man who deserved to be remembered. The Scottish peerage has produced many men eminent in the camp and the senate; in the more congenial field of letters it has been comparatively barren. Sir William Stirling-Maxwell was distinguished by his polished tastes, his attractive and finished powers of speech, and his munificent patronage of the fine arts; but then Sir William was only a great country gentleman—though, to be sure, he might have been a peer had he chosen—and much of his later life was devoted to public affairs. The exquisite charm of his manner, the native force of his character, made him a power in the political world. In that world Lord Crawford had no place. The diffident and modest peer, the shy and ardent student, did not love the rough pressure of the crowd. It was among his books that he was most at home, and in such curious studies as befit the learned leisure of a grave and industrious scholar. The type of man is passing away from among us,—the man who, amid all the distractions of a great position, found his true happiness in honest work; and amid all the temptations which beset the favourites of fortune, cultivated the most simple tastes. It is not well for us that such men should pass away and leave no successors,—

[1] *Blackwood's Magazine*, March 1882. One of the papers on Local History—Chester in 1488—is taken from an Essay on Early English Life in the Drama, which appeared in the volume of *Edinburgh Essays* (1856). Many of the statements and deductions in that Essay appear to me now to be very questionable, if not altogether unsound; but I reprint a few extracts with the view of indicating what might be done with adequate leisure in a somewhat neglected field of English social and political literature—a history which I have often been anxious to undertake, and for which some sort of preparation has been made.

there is grave peril to the public weal when the voice of the unobtrusive and unimpassioned thinker is silenced by windy rhetoric or sectarian clamour. The acute conscientiousness, no less than the dignified reticence, the scrupulous integrity, and the manly independence of such men, disqualify them for active life in a society which is passionately stirred by every wind of doctrine,—now slavishly imitative, now frantically destructive, according to the whim of the moment. But we should never forget that it was the possession of such qualities by its governing class which made England what it is. The great war against Napoleon would never have been won if the democracy which deserted Lord Beaconsfield had been in power under Pitt. Behind Pitt was the consistent and strenuous force of an aristocracy which seldom yields to passion or to panic, and which has been trained to suffer disaster and to support defeat with stoical equanimity. But we have changed all that—more's the pity.

Some notices of a far more eminent Scotsman must also be postponed in the meantime. This is not perhaps altogether to be regretted; for though the clamour against "Papa Carlyle" (as Mr Ruskin calls him) has somewhat abated, the difficulty of reasonable speech on the subject is still considerable.[1] One sometimes fancies, rightly or wrongly, that any sobriety of judgment is ceasing to exist among us. The penny-a-liner has become a power in the land; and with the penny-a-liner everything of course is sacrificed to sensation. Unless we have our daily dish of melodramatic incident and adventure we feel hipped and bored,—the

[1] Nor can anything quite exhaustive and satisfactory be looked for until the life on which Mr Froude is engaged has been completed—a life which for close and sustained interest and brilliant lucidity must (to judge from the instalment we have got) take a first, if not *the* first place, in our biographical literature.

hunger for excitement growing with what it feeds on. The unreal, sophistical, rhetorical clap-trap by which we are governed at present, could be possible only among a people who have lost any close appreciation of fact, and who do not effectively recognise that there is a radical distinction between truth and falsehood. Yet I am far from saying that, even in an age when agitation has been reduced to a science, the old Scotch proverb—"There's aye water whar the stirkie drowns"—should be entirely discarded. I don't much believe in prophets myself—whatever dialect they may use; and the Carlyle dialect has seemed to me for a long time now to be getting flat, stale, and unprofitable. Carlyle, moreover, was that particularly unpleasant kind of mortal—"a peasant of genius;" and then these primitive products of the soil have commonly a host of relations who are not peasants of—genius. But there can be little doubt (whatever misunderstandings there may have been) that the outcry against the "Reminiscences" was mainly accentuated by a political faction. Carlyle had been for long the *bête noir* of the literary Radical. This old rugged Annandale seer and prophet, with his rude scorn and flinty common-sense, did not believe in the brand-new "religion of humanity;" and our democrats had thus an old score to wipe out. Here was a man of quite pre-eminent force and capability who had scouted democracy and abjured its idols—nay, who had reviled the Demos itself, and had even, so to speak, spat in its face. The nice susceptibilities of the literary Radical are easily wounded. A writer who can speak of the teeming millions who never weary of listening to the Premier as "twenty-five millions of Englishmen—more or less—mostly fools," is beyond the pale of Radical courtesy; and it is no wonder that one of Mr Morley's young men, coming without warning upon such appalling sentences as these—"Let

them trample it under foot and *hoof* as they see best;" "If they would give me £10,000 a-year and *bray* unanimously their hosannas heaven high"—should have been fairly upset. "The quite unseemly word *hoof*," Mr Cotter Morrison remarks in a recent number of the Radical monthly, "which I have underlined, is not the only one of its kind in these Reminiscences, and every one must admit that it is offensive in the extreme," &c. &c. And then a little later we are gravely informed (only the gravity is so comical) that the use of the word *bray* by a man of Mr Carlyle's eminence is "painful and regrettable indeed." To those of us who hold that the religion of humanity is an abject superstition, and that the teeming millions are no better, but as a rule far more foolish, than the prosaic tens and hundreds of educated gentlemen, true—Thomas's healthy contempt for the divinity which hedges the people (having latterly ceased to hedge either the king or the law), is distinctly refreshing; and they can pardon a good deal to the caustic old Scotchman who had lived into the mellifluous Gladstonian era without losing his vigorous if rather acrid individuality, and whose native antipathy to religious shams and political impostors was keen and lively to the last.

I don't mean, of course, to maintain that Carlyle was not, even in political matters, perversely wrong at times. The whole of that unspeakable Friedrich Wilhelm business can only be adequately dealt with as my friend Smelfungus has dealt with it in his memorable "Discourse on Sauerteig."[1] Carlyle's passage through "the valley of

[1] The paragraph of which I quote the opening sentences has not to my mind, for grim, almost tragic humour, and strong realistic mimetic power, been excelled since *A Tale of a Tub* was written:—

"Gay dawn, dewy bright, and up with it, alert to do the pretty bit of work put out for him our high Hero-Grimwold, stern joy in the visage of him, grim implacable. Up with it, also, probably with somewhat less joy in them, twenty poor doomed scoundrels, whose singular

the shadow of Frederick" was, to be sure, utterly wearisome; and to the man sorely afflicted by "those printed blotches of human stupor edited by the Nightmares" for which the German Dryasdust is responsible (Dryasdust manifesting, moreover, "a composed stupidity and cheerful infinitude of ignorance," and not giving "even an Index") much may be forgiven. Yet, after every allowance is made, it must be confessed that the kingdom of Prussia was a very questionable idol. Something more than "Drill" (with a big D) is needed to form a people. The history of modern Europe as it presented itself to Mr Carlyle's mind was the history of the War of Cosmos against Chaos, of unity against anarchy, of divine order against the disorder of the devil. But Friedrich Wilhelm's Potsdam Guards are surely not the highest products of the Conquest? Heine wittily described Frederick the Great as "the Frederick who *invented* the Prussian monarchy." The phrase, when applied to the functions of the Hohenzollerns, was peculiarly felicitous.

last-Night thoughts, could we but know them, as we cannot, might be preferable to those of Dr Young. Thrilling the wide air, infinite small twitter and piping of glad birds, sedulous, with gratefullest twitterings, pipings, to welcome in the new day; ragged losels, to extent of twenty, about to die, looking out into all this, listening to it all, too surely for the last time, with feelings of some little peculiarity perhaps. Feelings, thoughts, doubtless, in their way, peculiar enough, which, on the whole, one would not object to see into a little. Frightful is it? O losels! certes, *most* frightful! And yet, what if intrinsically even more *strange* than frightful! the frightfulness, in nature's mercy to us, strangely absorbed into the *strangeness* of it. Alas, poor losels! dim blockheads, who cannot, even here on the grim edge of it, get rightly to *believe* they are to die! O heavens! is it not all some black foul dream and unreality, from which we may momently wake up again?"

It is now an open secret that this really unique piece of transcendental mimicry was the work of Mr Patrick P. Alexander of Edinburgh, who scored an almost equal success in his extraordinarily subtle dissection of John Stuart Mill. Goldwin Smith (on Mansel) and Patrick Alexander (on Mill) are Free Lances in the dreary and dusty field of metaphysics, where their wicked cleverness is, I daresay, quite out of place, but oh, so refreshing!

The kingdom of Prussia is not a kingdom prescribed and defined by nature. On the contrary, it is scattered in a miscellaneous way over the map of Europe. The people are not homogeneous, nor originally united by any common ties, social or historic. Thus the fragmentary kingdom of Frederick represents not a race, but a family. It represents the thrift, the sagacity, the prudence, the acquisitiveness of the Hohenzollerns; the obstinate masterfulness of a close-fisted house, which never relinquished what it had once grasped. It is not wonderful that the historian of this monarchy should be more disposed to attribute national progress to the controlling influence of the governing intellect than to the silent and potent activities of the people. But because the Prussian monarchy is, in the meantime, a fairly successful "invention," it is foolish to calumniate the societies which have been more simply and spontaneously evolved, and which, resting on social affinities and historic associations, derive their strength, permanence, and solidity from the native laws of national life. The one-sidedness of Carlyle was no doubt the necessary recoil from the one-sidedness of democracy: still, in political philosophy as in everything else, the true canon is that enunciated by the apostle—"Let your *moderation* be known unto all men."

Disraeli, with imperturbable gravity, offered to make the crusty old prophet a K.C.B.; but perhaps the finest compliment ever paid to Carlyle came from the King of Prussia,—the bronze statue of Marshal Keith, which as a sort of visible thank-offering for "the good services rendered to Prussia by the highly gifted Scottish Historian," the king presented to the good people of Peterhead. Carlyle did not hear of the gift or of the compliment until I sent him the local papers; and with the letter, the pleasant, kindly, and surely modest letter, which he wrote me in reply, a preface which I fear has

grown gossipy and egotistical on my hands (only they say a preface is bound to be egotistical, and among the Philistines to be singular is to be damned), may be brought to a close.

"CHELSEA, 21*st Sept.* 1868.

"DEAR SIR,—Thanks for your attention in regard to that of Peterhead and the Keith statue, which I had not heard of before. I do not quite learn whether the King of Prussia means to furnish the expectant town with a *Bronze* article, but conclude he does; scene being *sub dio*, and unfit for a softer material, and the donor a king. I hope they will be grateful! The statue represents a fine bushy-browed, effective-looking Scottish man, and seemed to me a good one. I think it is not Bismarck but Bernstorf himself that writes about Frederick's History or 'Historian;' but indeed it is much the same.

"I should have liked well to meet you at Mr Syme's; the name 'Shirley' has long been familiar to me, and I read with avidity what I find marked in that way. May all go well with you in your quiet glen, of which also I have heard from witnesses.—With many thanks for your kindness toward me, yours sincerely, T. CARLYLE."

For the noble design which enriches this volume, I am indebted to my dear and admirable friend, Noel Paton, a painter who has carried into mature life the ardent aims and aspirations of his youth, and who has thus, in art as in life, kept himself, in the truest sense, unspotted from the world.

Noel Paton is left to us; but he is nearly the last of the notable Edinburgh figures. Even John Brown is gone; and without the "J. B." whom Thackeray loved and Ruskin loves, our streets hardly know themselves. You still fancy that round the next corner you are safe to meet him—with so little effort he made himself indispensable to us all! The pure ideal head, the soft caress of his manner, the humorous inconsequence of his talk, the sensitive reticent delicacy of the whole man, soul

and body (at last the mere flesh grew so fine and fragile and etherealised that one could identify it almost with that spiritual body of which the Apostle speaks, from which whatever is of the earth earthy has been withdrawn) impressed themselves inevitably on the merest passer-by; to those to whom his last book had been sent only a few weeks before he died as the final assurance of "ancient and warm regard,"[1] Death blotted out as sweet and mellow a picture of Old Age as any of them had anywhere seen;—an old man—for he was over seventy—but with the child's heart looking through the mild, wistful, inquisitive eyes, which yet at times, like those of a dumb animal in pain, were so mutely sorrowful.

"A wan pure look, wellnigh celestial,"

Robert Browning says in something between poetry and prose; and then he explains why it was so:—

"Those blue eyes had *survived* so much!"

"What is the meaning of *Horæ Subsecivæ*, papa?" a little maiden is made to ask in one of the charming letters which contain so much that is characteristic,—his familiar letters indeed being even better and more like himself than his printed articles.

"*Brown* Studies, my dear," is the reply.

J. S.

THE HERMITAGE OF BRAID,
EDINBURGH, 11*th November* 1882.

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[1] "23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH,
9th February.

"MY DEAR SHIRLEY,—Consider the copy of John Leech, &c., or as I wished it called, Brown's Potted Head, given you by the author with his ancient and warm regard, and a cry for mercy.—Yrs. and placens's ever truly, J. BROWN."

Dr Brown died in May of this year, after a few days' illness,—bright and interested and quaintly humorous to the end.

MARY STUART.

—o—

THE INTRODUCTION.

OF THE WRITING of books about Mary Stuart there is no end. A crowd of brilliant writers have expended upon her fascinating story astonishing industry and infinite ingenuity. Buchanan, Lesley, Goodall, Hume, Robertson, Laing, Whittaker, Chalmers, the Tytlers, Walter Scott, Aytoun, Froude, Burton, Hosack,—it is a literature in itself. It might well seem superfluous to add another stone to the cairn that has been raised to the memory of the ill-fated Queen. But it must be confessed that the industry of her apologists has in general been more obvious than their logic. They have collected an immense mass of most valuable facts, but they have hardly succeeded in bringing them into orderly relation to each other, or in ascertaining, in the scales of a scientific criticism, their comparative weight as bearing upon the question at issue. The bulk, too, of these apologies is something prodigious,—the curtest defence of the Queen being seldom compressed into less than three or four volumes octavo. And besides all this, it must be admitted that the controversy has

been conducted, on one side as on the other, in a spirit of most unjudicial vehemence.

> "Raised in extremes, and in extremes decried,
> With oaths affirmed, with dying vows denied."

Passionate partisans will not listen to reason, nor to the suggestion that a *via media* may be found. Yet it appears to me to be as great a mistake, on the one hand, to invest Mary Stuart with the attributes of monstrous, unnatural, and detestable criminality, as to reduce her, on the other, to the insipidity of saintship. To the best of my belief Mary was neither a transcendent sinner nor a shining saint,—she was simply a brave, brilliant, high-spirited woman, who had a haughty scorn for meanness and cowardice, a hearty capacity for enjoyment, and who could hate her enemies with all the keenness of a quick, sensitive, and somewhat pagan temper. I have never been able to agree with those who maintained that she loved Darnley to the last, and that she was innocently ignorant as a child of the design of the nobility to remove him,—*that* proposition appearing to me to be as incredible as the other, which affirms that she blew Darnley into the air because she was ruinously in love with an ill-favoured soldier of fortune like Bothwell. It is unfortunate that Mary's apologists will insist on making her a sort of virgin martyr, and will not be satisfied with what she really was,—a far more curious, complex, subtle, and interesting piece of humanity. The consequence is, that the case against her has been immensely strengthened,—every incident which goes to show that she was cognisant of the action of the nobility against Darnley going to show, at the same time, that she was madly attached to the man to whom the execution of the plot was ultimately intrusted by his fellow-peers.

The defence which I venture to submit is based upon

what I hold to be the only consistent and credible explanation of her conduct. It is the speech of an advocate who for once believes in his client, and who does not resort to special pleading, because he holds that he is entitled to obtain a verdict of "Not guilty" upon the merits.

And this allusion enables me to explain in a sentence why this defence of Mary has assumed the form in which it appears. When Mr Froude's volumes upon the Darnley murder and the Bothwell marriage made their appearance in 1863, I told the author that he had failed to satisfy me that Mary had "aided and abetted" in the sense in which the Casket Letters represent her as "aiding and abetting." Mr Froude, in reply, proposed, with his natural candour and courtesy, to insert in *Fraser's Magazine* (of which he had become the editor on the lamented death of John Parker), any observations on the subject that I chose to send him. Circumstances prevented me from taking immediate advantage of this liberal offer, and it was not until 1870 that I found leisure to throw into shape the facts and arguments on which I relied. It was difficult, in such circumstances, to speak *in propria persona;* but it occurred to me that any awkwardness might be avoided by putting my reply into the mouth of the counsel who had been retained to defend the memory of the Queen, and who could attack the "learned brother" who had preceded him with the chartered freedom of the bar. With extensive additions and alterations—much of it being entirely rewritten—that reply is now republished.[1]

[1] In the interval Mr Burton's lively and learned *History of Scotland* had appeared, and the reader will find that a considerable portion of the speech is devoted to an examination of the arguments which he has directed against the Queen. Mr Burton's tone is studiously moderate, and he preserves an air of judicial impartiality which is hardly fair to Mary, seeing that he is really a sturdy and uncompromising partisan.

The trial was supposed to have reached the closing day, and the report began with the peroration of the speech for the Confederate Lords, which was designed to compress into a few brief and pregnant paragraphs the various considerations that had been urged against the Queen. Thus;—

THE SPEECH FOR THE LORDS.

"WHEN the Court rose last night I had concluded my detailed analysis of the evidence which has been adduced by my learned friend and by myself, and it now only remains for me to sum up the general results at which we have arrived. Well, then, gentlemen, we find that Mary Stuart returned to Scotland in 1561, resolved to reverse the Reformation. She had been selected by the great Catholic Confederacy to bring Scotland and England back to the Church, and she had zealously accepted the mission, for she was by education and habit a bitter and intolerant Romanist, who would have drunk greedily the blood of the saints. This purpose fired almost into genius a really supreme intellect—an intellect of the finest and rarest fibre. Yet, like the Catholic society of the age, her nature was composite—she was a devotee and a rake. She had been educated in a sort of moral Hell; the atmosphere of the French Court, with its devilish vices and graces, had been breathed by her from her earliest girlhood; and her temper was vehement and unregulated. For years after her return she was forced to dissemble. The Reformation could not with fair hopes of success be directly assailed—it needed to be undermined. To carry out her object more securely, Mary put herself into the hands of the Reformers, and did not attempt to restrain the violence of their zeal. At length the hour arrived when, having planted herself firmly on her throne, having won the love of her subjects by her really great qualities—her wit, her gaiety, her courage—she could venture to remove the mask. She joined that Catholic alliance from which a brood of furies sprang, and she married her cousin, Lord Darnley, whom

she did not love, with the intention of uniting and consolidating the Catholicism of England and Scotland.

"Elizabeth and Murray had been lulled into a dangerous security by Mary's docility and candour. Their eyes were opened by this unmistakable declaration of war, and they were unwillingly forced to take up arms in defence of their common faith. But Mary's stealthy arts had not been wasted, and Murray soon found to his cost that the Queen had both the power and the will to crush him. She drove him and his friends across the Border, and for a time Protestantism appeared to be in imminent peril.

"But, on the brink of victory, the weak point in Mary's character asserted itself. With her own hand she shattered the edifice she had raised. She took a passionate uncontrollable aversion to her husband, and she fell in love with another man.

"Darnley, perhaps, in spite of his sins, might have been allowed to live on, but for his share in David Rizzio's murder. The Protestant Lords had induced the foolish lad to join the conspiracy against the Catholic secretary, and he was present in the Queen's boudoir when the murder was committed. She swore with hot tears that she would give him a sore heart: and she kept her word.

"Even before the murder of Rizzio, Mary had been on familiar terms with Bothwell. After the murder their intimacy became notorious. They sinned in the most open manner, and the Queen's infatuation about her lusty lover was publicly manifested. Her extraordinary visit to his Castle of Hermitage, in Liddesdale, as well as her frequent interviews with him in the lodgings of his discarded mistress, were known to all the world. It was obvious that she was ready to marry him if her husband could be got rid of: and Bothwell—as she well knew—was not the man to stick at trifles.

"They tried to poison him at Stirling, but the drug would not work; and then, sick and terrified, the wretched Darnley fled to his father's country. But Mary followed him to Glasgow and lured him to the Kirk o' Field, which Bothwell had prepared for his reception. The proud spirit of the Queen must have protested against the work in which they were engaged, and her letters show how keenly she felt the degradation of her treachery. 'I am doing what I hate. Would

you not laugh to see me lie so well and dissemble so well, and tell truth betwixt my hands? I must go forward with my odious purpose. You make me dissemble so far that I abhor it, and you cause me to do the office of a traitress. If it were not to obey you I had rather die than do it: my heart bleeds at it.—Alas! I never deceived anybody: but I remit me altogether to your pleasure.—Have no evil opinion of me for this, you yourself are the cause of it: for my own private revenge I would not do it to him. Seeing then that to obey you, my dear love, I spare neither honour, conscience, hazard, nor greatness, take it, I pray you, in good part.' There is real anguish in these lines; but she had become the slave of a passion which she could not disobey, and which had utterly subdued her. So she brought the plastic Darnley with her to Edinburgh, where the miserable business was quickly finished. 'Whidder then is he led?'—these are the words of the honest and impartial Buchanan,—'Into the maist desolate part of the town, sumtyme inhabitit while the Papische preistis kingdom lestet, bot for certane yeiris past without ony dwaller, in sic a hous as of itself wold haif fallin downe, gif it had not been botched up for the tyme to serue the turne of this nichtis sacrifice. Now, I beseik you, sen ye cannot with your eyis, yet at the leist with your myndes behold, ane hous whilum of auld preistis, among graves, betwene the ruynes of twa tempellis, itself also ruynous, neir to the theifis hant, and itself ane resetter of theifis, not far from the fort and garrisoun of his enemies, that stude richt over againis the dure, be whilk gif ony man suld fle out, he culd not eschaip their traterous ambuschment. The veuary schape of this place, when ye considder in your mynd, when ye heir of the ruines of kirkis, graves of deid men, lurking corneris of theifis, bordelhousis of harlotis—dois not, I say, not the hous only, but also everie part neir about it, serue to proclaim mischeif and trecherie?'

"This was the house which, on the morning of February 10, 1567, was, with the unlucky Darnley, blown into the darkness. It is only fair to say that the Queen was in general true to her friends, and now she did her utmost to screen her accomplice. But her efforts were unavailing; the dramatic accompaniments of the murder arrested the attention of Europe, and the general instinct divined that Mary and her paramour were the murderers. Though Darnley had been removed, and Lady Both-

well divorced on a shameful plea, to enable them to wed, yet the feelings of horror and indignation which their crime had evoked, forced them to pause. As a *voluntary* marriage would have been ruinous to the Queen, it was arranged between them that Bothwell should appear to carry her off by force. She went to Stirling, and the 'ravishment' was effected on her return. A month afterwards they were married at Holyrood, and the widow of Henry Stuart became the wife of his assassin. But their happiness was short-lived; the outraged national sentiment rose in revolt against these monstrous nuptials, and the Queen was separated from her lover, and secluded in the Castle of Lochleven. These are the undoubted circumstances of the case; and I maintain, gentlemen, that the sequence of circumstance alone is sufficient to convict the Queen.

"Gentlemen, I am done. The immense mass of evidence which has been laid before you must have produced on your minds a somewhat bewildering impression. But I venture to say that, amid the chaotic confusion, one story is told with fatal precision, one figure stands out in disastrous simplicity. The duty which you have to discharge is as simple and as precise."

THE SPEECH FOR THE QUEEN.

MAY it please your Lordship,—The earliest portrait of Mary, drawn by her enemies, which has been handed down to us, is that contained in the *Detectio Mariæ Reginæ* of George Buchanan. It is a picture drawn in black throughout. The light which falls upon the guilty Queen is lurid and ghastly. This northern Messalina, who revels in abominable wickedness, is eager to murder, not her husband only, but her year-old boy, to smooth Bothwell's path to the throne. It would have been easy to dispose of this vile and grotesque monster in Mary's own words—"The natural love which the mother bears to her only bairn is sufficient to confound them, and needs no other answer." But my learned friend, while offering a nominal allegiance to Buchanan, occupies a more tenable position. His, I am bound to admit, is a fine and subtle study, characterised by a really imaginative insight into the motives and passions which the tragic Muse enlists, and I know that it must have produced a very vivid impression on your minds. How am I to remove this impression? I can appeal to your impartial judgment alone. I am a plain speaker, unused to the arts of the rhetorician; but the story which I have to tell needs no embellishment,—cannot, on the contrary, be told too simply or too plainly. My friend has waxed eloquent upon the greatness and the glory of Queen Elizabeth. I have a humbler client; but I may be permitted to say that—after the closest investigation into her career, from the hour when she entered Holyrood, until in the hall at Fotheringay she ended an agitated and troubled life in a really heroic and queen-like fashion—I have failed to detect anything mean, or base, or false, or cowardly, in the character of Mary Stuart.

Now, gentlemen, there is one matter regarding which at the outset it is important that there should be no misunderstanding

between us. It is said that we who decline to believe that the Queen was guilty are "sentimentalists,"—that is the expression, I think, which my learned friends employ.[1] They mean, I presume, that the sentiment by which we are influenced is a sentiment of unreasonable admiration or unreasonable pity. It is of course unnecessary for me to point out that it is also possible to indulge in a sentiment of unreasonable hostility, and that the nickname may with even more propriety be applied to the partisan whose reason is clouded and whose judgment is warped by an intemperate passion of dislike. Gentlemen, what I propose to do, what I ask you to do, is to lay sentiment entirely aside, and to look at the indictment simply in the light of the evidence that has been adduced. Is Mary Stuart guilty,—Yea or Nay?

Well, gentlemen, the issue which my friend has framed, and which he now submits to you, is in these terms: "Whether the said Mary Stuart was privy, art or part, to the murder of her husband, Henry Stuart, Lord Darnley? and whether the said Mary Stuart was privy to the said murder in order that she might marry the Earl Bothwell?" You see what my learned friend's case requires. Before you can return an affirmative answer you must be persuaded that Mary murdered Darnley to enable her to gratify a "filthy and inordinate love" for Bothwell. It is the combination of these two elements that gives its more than dramatic wickedness to the crime; unless the murder and the love had interlaced, the tragedy at Kirk o' Field would have been quickly forgotten. This is not a technical plea arising out of the form of the issue which my friend has framed. If Darnley, with the consent of the woman whom with unmanly meanness he had wronged and slandered, was simply removed out of the world as a noxious, unclean animal, hateful to God and man, the verdict, even from the impartial assize of history, must be substantially a verdict of acquittal.

It is clearly, gentlemen, of the first importance, in enabling

[1] Hume is profoundly contemptuous,—"An English Whig who asserts the reality of the Popish plot; an Irish Catholic who denies the massacre in 1641; and a Scotch Jacobite who mantains the innocence of Queen Mary, must be considered as men beyond the reach of argument or reason."

us to understand what follows, that we should obtain a distinct conception of the character of the girl—for she was little more than a girl—who in 1561 entered the Royal Palace of Holyrood as Queen of Scotland. She was only eight days old when she became the nominal, only eighteen years old when she became the actual, ruler of Scotland. My friend says that all her girlhood was spent at the wicked French Court,—the truth being that by far the greater part of her life, up to the day when she sailed for Leith, had been passed in the seclusion of a nunnery. Her brief married life abroad was blameless,—Mr George Buchanan even can find no flaw in her behaviour to Francis, except that she poisoned him. But she had been bred a Roman Catholic by her uncles—the great Catholic soldier, and the great Catholic priest—and she returned to Scotland with a purpose fixed as the stars to undo the Reformation. So my learned friend says; and her conduct during the four years that followed is attributed by him to consummate deceit and prolonged dissimulation.

I am ready to join issue with him here. It is quite true that during these years Mary's policy was studiously moderate, and even to a certain extent anti-Catholic. The power was in the hands of the Protestant nobility and clergy; but, as far as possible, she exerted her influence against its harsh and arbitrary exercise. In so far as it was a moderate policy it reflected her own inclinations; in so far as it was anti-Catholic it was forced upon her. Mary was not a fanatic. There is no proof whatever that she was devoted to Rome. She had at most, in those earlier years, a conservative attachment to the Church in which she was bred. But it went no deeper,—quick observers like Randolph could see that her ecclesiastical sympathies were not keen. Her nature, indeed, was of that large and magnanimous sort which does not relish restraint. She was at home in the saddle, and she talked as fearlessly as she rode. It has been said that Elizabeth was half a Catholic at heart; Mary, on the contrary, was half a Protestant. She was far ahead, however, of the ordinary Protestant of her own age. Some dim conception of what we mean when we speak of freedom of conscience had been formed by her. My friend is merely libelling her when he says that she would have enjoyed a Bartholomew,—there is no proof whatever that her heart was cruel, or that she loved blood. She wanted tolera-

tion for herself and for her friends—nothing more. It is easy to assert that her zeal for religious liberty may be traced to the fact that she was in the minority. It may have been so: such an assertion, rising, as it does, into the region of *motive*, does not admit of an absolute negative. But I venture to entertain a very confident belief that Mary, from her unfanatical point of view, saw no particular reason why Christian men, as a Christian duty, should constantly burn and hang and torture each other. That she was in the minority may possibly have quickened this conviction into activity; but it was primarily due to what her contemporaries would have called a sceptical habit of mind. Whatever its source, she held to it at least with singular consistency and tenacity; she was never satisfied with less, and she never asked for more. Before she left France she told Throgmorton that the religion which she professed she took to be upon the whole the most acceptable to God, but that she meant to constrain none of her subjects, and hoped that none of them would be supported to constrain her. Throgmorton saw her afterwards in Edinburgh. "The Queen," he wrote, "quietly tolerates the Reformed Religion, who is thought to be no more devout towards Rome than for the contentation of her uncle." When a fanatical assembly assured her that the practice of idolatry could not be tolerated in the sovereign any more than in the subject, she told them plainly that while no consideration would induce her to forsake the religion in which she had been brought up, yet she did not desire to force the conscience of any person, but would permit every one "to serve God in such manner as they are persuaded to be the best;" and the Act passed in 1567, when she was all-powerful in Parliament and in the country, was an Act to secure liberty of religion, and liberty only.

It is quite possible that she designed ultimately to obtain the repeal of the laws which proscribed the exercise of her religion, and to recover for the Catholic clergy some portion of the ecclesiastical revenues which a rapacious nobility had appropriated. But it did not enter into her head to ally herself with the intemperate zealots who were eager to drag every heretic to the stake. No word of hers can be quoted which will bear such construction. She was a dutiful daughter of the Church, in the courtly ecclesiastical language, and that was all. My friend says that she signed the Catholic League. The evidence

(as I shall show) is quite the other way. She held herself resolutely aloof from the great conspiracy against the Reformation which was being hatched by the kings and bishops of Catholic Europe.

Later in life Mary's religious convictions grew in force and intensity. She became a saint of the Church, a martyr for the faith. She had been bitterly persecuted, and persecution bore its usual fruit. Suffering fanned her devotion to her Church into a fiercer glow. The even balance of her mind was upset The cruelly hunted victim turned upon the hunters. People against whom the shafts of intolerance have been constantly directed cease to believe in toleration. It is only a mind of the very finest temper that can resist the temptation to retaliate. And at a time, moreover, when all the world had deserted her, the Catholic Church had remained true. She was driven into an ardour of piety alike by gratitude and by resentment.

One fixed purpose Mary undoubtedly harboured. She was resolved that sooner or later she would be Queen of England. She was in any view the next heir to, and, in the view of many, the legitimate occupant of the throne which Elizabeth—a bastard—had usurped. To this conviction she clung throughout her life with invincible tenacity. Neither menace nor persuasion could induce her to ratify the Treaty of Edinburgh, by which her title to the English succession had been thoughtlessly signed away.[1] But she could bide her time, and she was willing to wait with patience.

Willing to wait, and to take life in the meantime, in that austere country which she had been born to rule, on the easiest available terms. She was, we know, endowed with all the gifts and graces which captivate the hearts of men. The most beautiful woman of the age must have found in her beauty alone a force of attraction and command. Then her conversation was lively—her intellect was keen and politic—her manners were winning—she loved letters and poetry, and

[1] "The Scottish Queen," Mr Burton says, "by declining to accept of the Treaty of Edinburgh, adhered to her claim on the English throne;" but the words in the treaty to which Mary reasonably and prudently objected (words capable of being construed into an absolute renunciation of her right), were that she and her husband should "in all times coming" abstain from bearing the English title.—*Burton's History of Scotland*, iv. 289.

the arts which soften and adorn life. Yet though her vivacity was extreme, and the "wantonness" of her deportment was rebuked by the Reformers, Mary's character was not gay. She had not that deeply rooted equanimity which keeps people inwardly cheerful: she needed the excitement of action to prevent her from growing sad. For there was, after all, if not a deep vein of sadness, at least a poetic pensiveness—the pensiveness of a doomed race—in her nature; and when she was not brilliantly discursive she suffered from *ennui*, lassitude, and despondency.

My learned friend has likened her to some wild animal of the forest — a pantheress, or tiger-cat — the soft lustrous fur hiding the sharp claws and the taste for blood. Her fierceness and her vindictiveness, her stealthiness and her patience, were feline. Had he said that she was audaciously frank, and that she forgot and forgave far too readily, he would have come nearer to the mark. Mary was wonderfully successful as a ruler,—until the murder of Darnley she crushed every outbreak in the bud,—but she did not win victory by deceit. She blazed out vehemently; not in politic diplomacy, but in these sudden electrical bursts of passion, lay her power. Her magnificent force of indignant and angry energy shattered her enemies like a hurricane when it breaks. But the storm quickly spent itself, and then her scattered foes recovered themselves, one by one, and she was only too ready to forget the past, and to be pleasant and friendly again. She needed to be roused out of the dreamy imaginative indolent mood that was natural to her; but when once roused, woe to the man or woman in her way! Once rouse her, and then this girl who, by nature, was inclined to trifle, to float with the stream, to put as far as possible from her what was grim and ugly and tragic in life, was transformed into such a beautiful destroying angel—haughty, defiant, inflexible—as poetry has created.

Such was Mary. Sedate and tranquil as a rule, yet daring in the presence of danger, and finding a bracing charm in manly exercise and the mountain air,—ready at any moment to quit the luxuries of her palace for a swift gallop under the stars,—a true daughter of Scotland and the North!

Those writers, gentlemen, who have represented the Queen as the mere slave of a specifically sensual nature, seem to me to

misunderstand her utterly. Her enemies admit that she was true and constant in friendship. Friendship is a masculine virtue, and Mary's character was masculine in this respect, that friendship was more necessary to her than love. I shall have more to say on this matter directly: in the meantime I shall only add that, to assume that the gratification of passion, lawful or unlawful, was, even in the most subordinate sense, the business of Mary Stuart's life, is a complete delusion. She had a clear politic sense of the necessities of her station. She was a person round whom world-wide interests converged, and to her a mere love-match was clearly out of the question. So, during the not unhappy years that preceded the Darnley marriage, she sought in art and letters that relaxation from the cares of state which she could not enjoy in domestic life; and, when the work of the day was finished, amid a few choice associates, she gathered the wits and poets and scholars—the Maitlands, the Chatelars, and the Buchanans—of the Court around her.

It is impossible to deny that the position of this girl-queen was supremely difficult. She was a Queen, a Catholic, and the next in succession to the English throne. Here were three enormous disabilities. A chronic war had been maintained for centuries between the turbulent nobility of Scotland and their sovereign. The great vassals had rendered only a nominal allegiance to the Crown. They had latterly taken the bit between their teeth, and had no mind to lose the ascendancy which they had acquired—especially when the reins were in a woman's hands. It must be admitted, moreover, that the Scotch nobles of that age were about the basest, the most unscrupulous, the most corrupt aristocracy of which history contains any record. Treachery was their native air. The Protestant peer was even more disreputable than the Catholic. Some of the Catholic peers still retained a certain old-fashioned, old-world sense of honour; but to the Protestant peer, who had embraced the Reformed doctrines for his own aggrandisement, and who adhered to them because he had great material interests bound up with Protestantism, the word was not in the dictionary. My friend has pronounced an eloquent eulogy upon the Earl of Murray. Murray's is a character which I do not care to scan too closely. When I am told, indeed, that the blameless Earl had no taint of self, I cannot help recalling

certain incidents of his career. Murray, with no taint of self, was a pensioner both of England and of France; Murray, with no taint of self, warily kept out of the way of danger till the fruit of intrigue was ripe; Murray, with no taint of self, left a princely inheritance to his daughter; Murray, with no taint of self, and animated by chivalrous regard for his sister, was the mainspring of every treasonable conspiracy against her. Yet in Murray there may be detected, undoubtedly, those elements of greatness which, in spite of craft, cupidity, and selfishness, win, and deservedly win, the admiration of mankind. He was a man eminently capable of governing, and only a slight slip of a girl stood between him and his true work in the world! I will not, therefore, enter into the controversy which Murray's career provokes. I am willing, when speaking of the Protestant nobility, to assume that his name does not figure on the list,—nay, to admit, that in some respects, the memorable words which a generous enemy applied to Brutus, might not improperly be addressed to the great Regent,—

> "This was the noblest Roman of them all.
> All the conspirators save only he
> Did that they did in envy of great Cæsar;
> He only in a general honest thought
> And common good to all, made one of them.
> His life was gentle, and the elements
> So mix'd in him, that nature might stand up
> And say to all the world, 'This was a man!'"

The early Protestantism of Scotland, besides, was a political as well as a religious force. It was an outbreak of the democratic spirit against the fat, sleek, avaricious, bloated churchman —the most obvious aristocrat of the day. Its ranks were mainly filled by the citizens of the burghs, and by the smaller gentry, both of whom were democratic in their ideas; and the instinctive antipathy to monarchy was necessarily intensified when the monarch was a Catholic.

The Scotch Queen, moreover, gentlemen, was the next heir to the English crown, and was as such a constant menace to Elizabeth. It thus became the policy of Elizabeth, and of the eminent statesmen who surrounded her, to blacken the character and to sap the authority of her rival. During the whole of Mary's short reign, the agents accredited to her Court by England were engaged in teaching disloyalty to her subjects.

The English faction had long been unpopular in Scotland; England was the ancient enemy, France was the ancient ally; but the Reformation reversed the familiar traditions, and the Scotch Reformers were an English as well as a democratic and Calvinistic party. It is true that Elizabeth did not like them, neither their Calvinism nor their democracy, and more than once it needed all the craft of Cecil to prevent an open rupture. She instinctively recoiled from a party which paid scant reverence to throne or altar, and the shame of an alliance with the "rascal multitude" must have been keenly resented by the haughty Tudor. But she could not dispense with their support; had she ceased to retain them in her service, Mary would have grown dangerously strong; so she continued to bribe them and to bully them, to wheedle them and to scold them, in her characteristic fashion.

To these three forces, the ambition and the greed of the Confederate nobles, the fierce intolerance of Calvinism, the jealous susceptibilities of Elizabeth and the steady animosity of her great minister, all the troubles of Mary's life were due. The English Calvinistic democratic party rebelled against Mary's mother when the Reforming ideas first acquired strength, rebelled against Mary herself when she married Darnley, again rebelled when Rizzio was murdered, again rebelled after the Bothwell marriage. Had she been left unmolested, she might have left the records of a happy and fortunate reign; but she was pursued by an implacable animosity, partly political and partly theological, that never wearied till she was hunted down.

It is obvious, gentlemen, that the Queen had little to hope for from any sense of justice or any sentiment of compassion that animated the party to which Knox and Morton and Buchanan belonged. To them this brilliant and bewitching girl was the incarnation of the very spirit of evil. Their writers and preachers wrote and preached about her exactly as they wrote and preached about Jezebel or the Witch of Endor. The heavy and lumbering caricature of Buchanan, for instance, is unworthy of a man of any literary or creative skill.[1] We must be cautious, therefore, in accepting what

[1] The most striking passage in the *Detectio* is the description of the Kirk o' Field, and it contains one really great piece of invective, viewed simply as such. But the motives assigned are grossly, vilely, and

these bitter fanatics said about one whom they were utterly incapable of judging.

Until her marriage with Darnley, Mary's reign was comparatively peaceful, and there can be no doubt that she succeeded in inspiring her subjects with a strong sentiment of attachment to her person. Elizabeth watched her progress with jealous eyes. Most of the Scotch Protestant nobles were in the pay of England, and the English diplomatic agents maintained throughout the entire reign of Mary confidential relations with what would now be called her Majesty's Opposition. It is clear that Mary resented this habitual and hostile espionage. But she was willing to keep on friendly terms with England. Elizabeth was a dangerously near and formidable neighbour, and Elizabeth might exclude her from the succession. Nay, she professed herself ready to make such a marriage as would be agreeable to her cousin, and there is no reason to doubt her good faith. If she had waited, however, till Elizabeth found her a fit husband, she would have waited till doomsday. Elizabeth trifled about Mary's marriage much in the same way that she trifled about her own; and when at last Mary insisted on entering into such a marriage as Elizabeth had indicated—a marriage with a native nobleman—she seized the opportunity with treacherous alacrity. She induced Murray and the Protestant nobility to rebel, and she did her best to foster civil war throughout Scotland. Her rival had grown too great.

The marriage with Darnley—strengthening and consolidating Mary's claims to the English succession—was a highly politic marriage. Elizabeth, of course, did not like it; and Murray, who chose to regard it as a religious as well as a political alliance, rode off to the country, and called his party to arms. But the rising was quickly suppressed. The Con-

childishly ridiculous. "Why was this place chiefly chosin? Thay pretend the helsumnes of air. O gude God! going about to murder hir husband, seikes scho for ane helsum air? To what use? Not to preserve his lyfe, bot to reserve his body to torment. Heirto tend hir wyfelie diligent attendance, and hir last cair of hir husbandis lyfe. Schoe feiris lest he suld be preventing deith, be delyverit from pane, *schoe wald fane have him feill himself die.*" Mr Burton candidly admits that in the *Detectio* "a quantity of incredible charges are heaped up," and that the general treatment of the story by Buchanan is utterly unreliable (iv. 447).

federate Lords found to their dismay that the people of Scotland had rallied round their Queen. She herself in steel jacket at the head of her troopers swept them away out of Edinburgh, over the Pentlands, to Dumfries, and at last—such of them as remained together—clean across the English border. Elizabeth hastened to make friends with Mary, and to intercede for the banished Lords. But Mary, angry and triumphant, declined, in language which was expressly designed to humiliate her cousin, "to allow either France or England to interfere between her and her revolted subjects."

The Darnley marriage, as I have said, was dictated by policy as much as by affection. I see no reason to doubt, however, that at first Mary really loved in a way the tall handsome lad. But it was impossible that he could retain her regard. The King was a base, unmannerly, vicious, dissolute boy; and if any faith is to be placed in the *chronique scandaleuse* of the day, his amours were of the vilest and most loathsome description. Before long it became known at Court that the King and Queen were far from friendly. Mary treated the young fool, who was making himself hateful to all parties, with unconscious contempt; and in his weak, crazy, diseased brain—for he was half mad—all sorts of angry and jealous delusions harboured. The poor irritable creature was in the mood for murder when Ruthven and Morton suggested to him that it would be prudent to put the Italian secretary out of the way.

David Rizzio conducted the foreign correspondence of the Scotch Government, and a skilful man in that capacity must of course have been highly useful to a Queen who had many foreign correspondents. But, except that he was an Italian, there is really no evidence of any kind against him. The scandal which associated his name with the Queen's has been explicitly disowned by my learned friends.[1] The Protestant Lords, however, felt instinctively that the accomplished secretary was in some way or other an impediment. He did not belong to their persuasion, and he was known to have influence with Mary. Yet his murder, after all, was a mere cloak to the real object of the conspiracy. The Lords of the Congregation had been scattered by Mary's swift and decisive energy,

[1] Froude, viii. 250; Burton, iv. 300.

and their most distinguished leaders were now in England under the protection of Elizabeth. Some of them, however, were still at Holyrood—Morton, Ruthven, Lindsay, and others. The Parliament of 1566 was about to meet, and it was presumed that the Parliament would attaint the banished Lords, and confirm the forfeiture of their estates. Mary, during the recent troubles, had shown that she was a woman of eminent capacity and courage, and quite able to rule her unruly subjects by her own mother-wit. *She* at least could not be made the tool of their cupidity or their fanaticism; on the contrary, were she permitted to retain power, their cupidity and their fanaticism would be steadily checked, if not sternly repressed. The dissensions between the Queen and her husband had by this time become public, and the foolish boy was induced to join the conspiracy,—the Lords undertaking to remove his rival, and make him king; he, on the other hand, consenting to recall Murray, and dissolve the Parliament. Such were the ill-assorted allies who joined hands over the mangled body of Rizzio.

The tragedy took place late at night in the Palace of Holyrood, in the presence of Mary Stuart, who was within three months of her confinement. Rizzio fell at the feet of his mistress, and clung to her dress. Darnley held her back, while the unfortunate secretary was dragged to the door, and stabbed again and again. The outraged indignant Queen, with angry tears in her eyes, turned fiercely upon her craven husband. "It shall be dear blood for some of you if his be spilt," she said, before she knew that he was dead. When the news was communicated to her by one of her ladies, she dried her eyes: "No more tears—I will think upon a revenge."

There is no conclusive evidence that these speeches were uttered by the Queen.[1] But there can be no doubt that they represent with tolerable accuracy the bitter emotions which the bloody fate of her favourite minister, as well as the indignity offered to herself, were calculated to excite. From that night, it may be admitted, the breach between the Queen and King was not to be repaired. Separation of some kind became obviously only a question of time.

[1] Mr Burton does not appear to accept them. "For this account, accepted in several quarters, I am aware of no better authority than Spottiswoode's mere statement, and the dubious memoirs attributed to Lord Herries" (iv. 313).

The conspirators were not permitted to reap the harvest on which they had reckoned. Murray, Rothes, Ochiltree, Kirkaldy of Grange, indeed, rode into Edinburgh next day to find the Queen a virtual prisoner in Holyrood. But during the night that followed, Mary convinced her foolish husband that he had chosen dangerous allies, as indeed was true enough, and persuaded him to fly with her to Dunbar. Bothwell and Huntley had escaped from the palace immediately after the murder, and were already in the field. Again the chivalry of Scotland rallied round its Queen, and, in the course of a week, Mary found herself at the head of an army which the Confederates did not dare to face. To escape her rapid hawk-like swoop they retired from Edinburgh and dispersed in all directions, the majority seeking the hospitality of Elizabeth, to whose ministers the nature and details of the plot had been confidentially communicated several weeks before its execution.

The conspiracy was foiled. But it read, gentlemen, a highly instructive lesson both to Mary and to her enemies. It taught the discontented Lords that their sovereign had succeeded in winning the confidence of the better part of her subjects, and that intrigue and rebellion would continue to be unremunerative unless they could first contrive to bring her into disrepute. It taught the Queen that there could never be any real amity between herself and the fanatical faction which regarded her as an idolatress; and that the sentiment of personal loyalty which was felt by men like Huntley and Bothwell, and Seton and Herries, was the mainstay of her throne.

Now, gentlemen, I must ask you to examine with the utmost attention the events that immediately followed the suppression of the Rizzio conspiracy in March 1566.

Darnley, as we have seen, had meanly and basely abandoned his associates in that affair. His baseness did not stop there. He appeared before the Council and declared solemnly that he was entirely innocent of the late murderous plot; and a proclamation to the same effect was made at the market-cross of Edinburgh. From the day on which that declaration was made Darnley was a doomed man. Men like Morton and Ruthven and Lindsay were not ready to forgive; and from his first coming it had been foreseen that, among a proud and jealous nobility, this foolish and presumptuous boy was likely to fare badly. But now he had proved himself to be a traitor

as well as a fool, and honour among thieves is an indispensable virtue. He had not a friend left in the world. The Queen was his wife, no doubt, but he had bitterly wronged her. In fact, if we believe only one-half of the scandalous rumours of the time, it is clear that Darnley deserved to be forcibly put away—with more or less of indignant loathing—like a noxious unclean reptile. The position of this unhappy lad during the last year of his life almost provokes our pity by its tragical isolation.

We cannot now probe, gentlemen, the feelings which Mary experienced when the character of her wretched husband was first plainly manifested to her. She had quickly learned that she had made a frightful blunder, and the murder of Rizzio must have turned natural vexation into burning and uncontrollable resentment. It is quite possible that for some days thereafter she thirsted for revenge. But Mary was not a good hater; she was always engaged in pardoning (from her brother downwards) her rebellious subjects. This facility of disposition was associated with, or rather was due to, that indolence of temperament to which I have adverted. Rizzio was murdered in March; and before her confinement, which took place in June, her heart had obviously softened. In the inventories of her effects drawn up before the birth of her boy, there are numerous bequests to Darnley, among the rest a diamond ring, enamelled in red, and against which is written, "It was with this that I was married; I leave it to the King who gave it me." It is to be noted, moreover, that neither in these inventories nor in her "State," as it is called, does Bothwell's name appear among the beneficiaries.[1] From these and other circumstances it may be fairly concluded that Mary's study of revenge was not consistently pursued, and that she sometimes relented.

It is at this time that Earl Bothwell first rises into note. He alone, among all the Protestant nobility, had never been a pensioner of Elizabeth. The old national animosity against England was embodied and personified in James Hepburn. "He is as mortal an enemy to our nation," said the sagacious Randolph, "as any man alive." On the other hand, he had

[1] I find that there is *one* bequest to Bothwell,—there being about twenty-five to Darnley. The matter, however, is really of no moment.

been the devoted servant both of Mary and of her mother,—among the faithless, faithful only found. He had ever been loyal to the monarchy. His fidelity was incorruptible. When the policy to which, through good and evil report, he had steadily adhered became a success, it was inevitable that he should attain a great political position. Mary was bound to advance the most trusty and serviceable of her subjects. He became virtually the first minister of the Queen. But there was no whisper, gentlemen, until after the murder of Darnley, that he was more than a faithful and trusted adviser of the Crown; and the busy slanderers of the Court, so far as we can gather from the documents that remain, never coupled his name with Mary's.

Buchanan, indeed, has ventured to assert that the criminal relations between them were at this time notorious, and that they sinned openly and recklessly. "They seemed to fear nothing more than that their wickedness should be unknown." Had this been true, some contemporary allusion would surely have been preserved. My learned friend has failed to recover a single line or word tending to show that such an impression prevailed. Buchanan himself attended the baptism of the infant prince, which took place at Stirling in December 1566; and he wrote an ode in honour of the event, in which Mary's graces and virtues are celebrated in undeniable Latin. This was at the very close of the year which, according to his narrative, had been passed in the open gratification of lawless passion. "I never," wrote De Croc, the French ambassador, about the same time, "saw her Majesty so much beloved, honoured, and esteemed, nor so great a harmony among all her subjects as at present is by her wise conduct; for I cannot perceive the smallest difference or division."

Two incidents, and two incidents only, occurred during that year, which by perverse ingenuity have been made to assume a malignant aspect. The Queen, in the first place, interested herself in Bothwell's marriage with the Lady Jean Gordon, a sister of Lord Huntley. You and I, gentlemen, would be inclined to fancy that, if her heart then belonged to Bothwell, she would not have been anxious to make a present of him to another woman. My learned friend takes a different view. "Experience in poor human nature," he says, "teaches us that people, terrified by the presence of temptation, do sometimes set up

barriers against it which they afterwards make frantic efforts to get over."[1] It is for you, gentlemen, to say which explanation is most consistent with your knowledge of the human heart. Anxious to erect a barrier between herself and Bothwell! As if no barrier had already existed! As if she, a married woman about to become a mother, could not otherwise secure immunity from the temptation of becoming—What?—his wife or his mistress! The other incident to which I allude was the ride from Jedburgh to the Hermitage. A special assize was being held by Mary at Jedburgh. Bothwell, who had been wounded while engaged in securing a culprit, was unable to attend the Court, at which, in virtue of his office as Warden of the Marches, he ought to have assisted. The Court sat for several days, and when the business was finished, Mary, attended by her brother, rode over to the Castle of Hermitage, eighteen miles distant, and stayed for some hours with the wounded Warden. There could be no hot and unseemly haste about a visit which was not paid until the business on hand had been entirely concluded. A day's ride was a not uncommon event in an age when riding was the habitual mode of travelling, and Mary, we know, was at home in the saddle. The prisoners who had been tried at the assize had been secured by the Warden, and the wound from Elliot had been received when engaged in this service. Mary would have shown scant courtesy, to say the least, had she failed to inquire after the viceroy's health before returning home. A stiff official inquiry would have suited some people; but Mary secured the love of her subjects, not by stiffness, but by an easy cordiality which was the natural expression of her warm and impulsive disposition. She understood the art of paying those gracious attentions which, coming from royalty, are so potent; and we can believe, besides, that she enjoyed heartily her rapid ride through wild Liddesdale in that mellow autumnal month which in Scotland is often the pleasantest of the whole year.

My friend, when facts fail him, takes refuge in fanciful—*very* fanciful—speculations. It is not utterly incredible, he says, that Mary should have grown infatuated about Bothwell. That she should have conceived a violent and unruly passion for a man old enough to be her father is not perhaps incredible,

[1] Burton, iv. 298.

gentlemen, but it is surely monstrously unlikely. "Not so absolutely startling," continues my learned friend, "when all the facts are considered. Mary was evidently one of those women to whom at that time a great affair of the heart was a necessity of life,—a necessity increased in intensity by her utter disappointment in her last attachment, and the loathing she entertained towards its object."[1]

I am not aware on what grounds my friend assumes that Mary was one of those women to whom a great affair of the heart was a necessity. We only know that she had been twice married, and that the latter at least was a marriage in which her heart was engaged. It seems to me, so far as we can judge from the evidence that exists, that Mary was precisely the sort of woman to whom an exclusive and absorbing passion was *not* a necessity. But, even supposing that my friend is right, surely the last man likely to evoke such a passion was the man whom she had known all her life, whose marriage she had promoted, who, if we are to believe contemporary writers, was singularly ill-favoured, and who had neither scholarly accomplishment nor natural superiority of character to recommend him to a woman of brilliant capacity and polished tastes. Love at first sight is, in its unreasoning violence, a recognised phenomenon; but the love which is slowly matured burns with a calmer and steadier flame. The frantic passion which Mary is alleged to have conceived for Bothwell is, considering its object, and the intimacy which for so many years had subsisted between them, wholly unnatural and unintelligible.

How then, by whom, and from what motives, was the murder of Darnley brought about? A good deal of information upon the subject has from first to last been obtained. Let us see clearly what it amounts to.

It may be said, generally, that the whole nobility of Scotland were in league against him. Murray, Morton, Lethington, Argyle, Huntley, Bothwell—all the leaders of the various political parties—had come to be of opinion that it would be of advantage to the public service that he should be put out of the way. He had with singular infelicity contrived to make himself obnoxious to each of them. He had been rude to one, arrogant to another, base and fickle and treacherous to all. The

[1] Burton, iv. 324.

report of the Craigmillar Conference proves that early in winter the plot had assumed definite shape, and that it was adopted by Murray and Lethington as well as by Bothwell, Huntley, and Argyle. The "band" drawn up by Sir James Balfour, and signed by Bothwell, Maitland, Argyle, Huntley, and others, was to the effect that "it was most profitable for the commonwealth that such a young fool and proud tyrant" should be "put off" one way or other. The execution of the deed appears to have been ultimately intrusted to Bothwell; but it must ever be kept distinctly in view that, in the plot against Darnley, every prominent peer and politician was engaged.

Was Mary aware that such a plot existed? The evidence upon this point is not conclusive: but the conversation that took place between her and Lethington at Craigmillar accurately indicates, I think, her real attitude in the business. "Then Lethington, taking the speech, said, 'Madam, fancy ye not that we are here of the principal of your Grace's nobility and council that shall find the means, that your Majesty shall be quit of him without prejudice of your son. And albeit that my Lord of Murray here present be little less scrupulous for a Protestant nor your Grace is for a Papist, I am assured that he will look through his fingers thereto, and will behold our doings, saying nothing to the same.' The Queen's Majesty answered: 'I will that ye do nothing wherethrough any spot may be laid to my honour or conscience, and therefore I pray you rather let the matter be in the estate as it is, abiding till God of His goodness put remeid thereto; that you believing to do me service may possibly turn it to my hurt and displeasure.' 'Madam,' said Lethington, 'let us guide the matter among us, and your Grace shall see nothing but good, and approved by Parliament.'" And so on.

It is in vain to contend, after this circumstantial testimony —and it is no part of my case—that Mary was utterly ignorant of the dangers which threatened Darnley. No statesman, however influential, would have ventured to put such a proposal in words—a proposal which certainly pointed to a virtual separation from her husband—unless he had had good reason to believe that it would not be unacceptable to his mistress. Mary neither said 'Yea' nor 'Nay' with sufficient emphasis. She halted between pity and aversion. Darnley had done her great and grievous wrong, and when Rizzio died at her feet, she

swore that he would be avenged. It is clear that she occasionally relented (she had loved Henry Stuart once, and he was the father of her boy); but it must be said that, knowing in a general way that the nobility of Scotland were leagued against him, she gave him no warning, and did not lift her hand to save him. There is no evidence to show that she was aware of the particular manner in which his removal was to be effected, and it is difficult to imagine (knowing what we know of her dexterous swiftness and readiness) that she took any part in the clumsy tragedy which followed. I am, for my own part, from various circumstances, rather inclined to hold that when the train was fired, she was in a melting mood. The other conspirators promised to send to Morton, who had just returned from England, a warrant from the Queen to embark in the enterprise: but it never came, and we may fairly conclude that it could not be obtained.

It is unnecessary, gentlemen, to linger over the incidents of the murder. Darnley, on quitting Stirling for Glasgow, after the baptism of the infant prince, was seized with what appears to have been small-pox. My learned friend presumes that Mary had tried to poison him. In truth, gentlemen, his constitution had been impaired by his excesses, and the poison was in his blood. He lay at Glasgow in a nerveless, shattered condition for some time. He knew that even Morton, the most bitter of his enemies, had been pardoned, and he feared the worst. Then he appears to have written to his wife, assuring her of his repentance, and asking her to forgive him. The Queen, moved, it might be, by his entreaties (for it seems probable that he had asked her to join him), went to Glasgow, and in the course of a few days returned to Edinburgh, bringing her husband with her. The disease from which he was suffering was understood to be infectious, and the invalid was taken, not to Holyrood, lying low among its marshes, but to the Kirk o' Field, a house which had belonged to one of the monastic orders. Some rooms were prepared for him, and a bedroom was fitted up for the Queen, which she occasionally occupied during the ten days that intervened. On the evening of Sunday, the 9th of February 1567, a large quantity of powder was conveyed into the house by Bothwell's retainers. It has been said that it was deposited in the Queen's sleeping-room; but as the house was torn up from the foundations—"dung in dross to

the very ground-stone"—it appears more probable that the greater part of it at least had been placed in one of the cellars. As eminently characteristic of the parsimonious spirit of this penurious Queen, it has been asserted (only it is the assertion of an arrant knave) that Mary showed extreme anxiety during supper about a cloak of marten-skins which she had directed a servant to remove from the Kirk o' Field. After supper she went to visit the King, and returned about eleven o'clock to the palace, where a masked ball was being held. Neither in going nor in returning did she enter her own room at the Kirk o' Field; but if the powder, as appears probable, was placed elsewhere, little significance attaches to this fact. About two or three o'clock next morning the Kirk o' Field was blown into the air. The bodies of Darnley and of his page were found at a considerable distance with no marks of fire upon them. They had been strangled, perhaps when attempting to escape; but as Bothwell clearly believed that they perished in the explosion, it is pretty certain that more than his own retainers had been engaged in the affair.

The manner in which the murder was committed,—so calculated to arrest attention, and to proclaim to all the world that Darnley had not died a natural death,—appears to suggest either an insane ferocity of hatred, or a feebleness of understanding closely bordering upon imbecility. My friend inclines to adopt the former view: "They were wrought up to the murder-point by some personal passion, which was not contented with the death of its victim, and required a fuller satisfaction in the picturesqueness of dramatic revenge." Is such an explanation admissible? is there any evidence that either Mary or Bothwell regarded Darnley with this frantic and irrational animosity? My friend's theory is that Mary and Bothwell desired to be at liberty to marry, and that with this object they removed Darnley. But this being their object, they would have taken care, if they were not absolute idiots, to send him out of the world without unnecessary fuss; and my friend does not maintain that Mary at least was an idiot. Does it not appear more probable that this highly "dramatic" mode of ridding the world of Darnley had been suggested by some one who desired to attract attention to the murder, and who was interested in noising it abroad?

Now, gentlemen, we have followed the successive stages of

the plot against Darnley, and have seen that it was really a combination of the great Scotch houses against the "young fool and presumptuous tyrant" who had incurred their resentment. All at once—the moment the Kirk o' Field is blown into the air—it changes its character, and becomes a domestic drama,—a private arrangement between Mary and Bothwell to enable them to enter into matrimony. The transformation takes place suddenly, secretly, unaccountably. It was one thing in December, it is another thing in February. What is the meaning of the change?

From the day of his treachery to the Lords, Darnley was doomed: it was certain that poison, or powder, or cold steel would end his miserable life; it was uncertain only which instrument would be used, and who would use it. It was a masterly stroke of policy to secure his death and yet to throw the odium exclusively upon Bothwell and the Queen—thus, so to speak, killing two birds with one stone. The subtle wit of Lethington must have sketched at least the outline of the plot. "Kill him by all means," we can hear him suggesting; "but what think you of this plan of mine? He has grossly outraged the Queen: let us take her along with us,—a mere hint of connivance will compromise her. And there is that trusty watch-dog who will obey no voice but her own,—why, a whisper to Bothwell that Darnley has abused her, and I would not give a straw for the boy's life. Nay, hold; can we not teach him to look for something more than gratitude? Why should he be satisfied with a smile? The saint whom he worships is a woman who may be won, and she will not press too hardly on the over-bold wooer. And behind this irrational brute violence—what? James the Sixth, by the grace of God and of Lethington, King of Scotland and—England!"

I do not mean to suggest that this design, as a whole, was formed at any one moment. Doubtless it was gradually matured. It progressed with the progress of events. But I am rather inclined to believe that the notion of marrying the Queen to Bothwell did not occur to any one until after the death of Darnley, and until it was more or less clearly apparent that (implicated as the Queen had been made to appear in the conspiracy of the nobility) a union with the most prominent and reckless of the conspirators would excite a storm of indignation.

At this point, gentlemen, I must once more ask you to re-

member that facts which may be presumed to show that Mary was cognisant of, or assenting to, the design of the nobility to remove Darnley, do not necessarily imply that she had been for some time before Darnley's death under the influence of an infatuated passion for Bothwell, to which her participation in the murder, if she did participate, is to be attributed. It has been customary to mix up and confuse the charges against the Queen, and my learned friend has seen the advantage of the practice. Let me observe, moreover, that until guilt is established, innocence is to be presumed; and that, in giving effect to this maxim, it is your duty, as it is no doubt your inclination, to accept an explanation consistent with the innocence of Mary, if that explanation be consistent also with the general purport and tenor of the evidence. Do not, however, misunderstand me. I do not rely on a forensic plea, nor will I ask for a verdict of acquittal, unless you can say on your consciences that you hold my explanation to be more credible, more consistent with the facts of history and of human nature, than that which has been submitted to you by my friend.

I have pointed out that the Queen of Scots was surrounded by enemies. Malignant eyes were upon her. Busy tongues were at work. It was inevitable, therefore, that the slightest indiscretion on her part would be coarsely magnified, and cruelly punished.

My friend has commented at some length on the Queen's demeanour after the murder. She did not go into hysterics, nor indulge in noisy manifestations of regret. She was "sorrowful and quiet." Her conduct appears to me, I confess, to have been perfectly becoming,—the horror and the suddenness of the catastrophe seem to have taken her by surprise, but she did not shed many tears in public over the fate of the man who had made her life bitter. But, becoming or unbecoming, no one knows better than my friend that innocence often looks like guilt, and that guilt often assumes the likeness of innocence. The test which he applies is not merely worthless—it is dangerous and misleading. The demeanour of an accused person is in general a question not of the conscience, but of the *nerves*.

One piece of scandalous gossip, indeed, has been retailed by my learned friend. "The Queen and Bothwell," Drury, the English resident at Berwick, wrote, soon after the murder, "have been shooting at the butts against Huntley and Seton for a dinner at

Tranent, which the latter had to pay." Drury appears to have been the most credulous of old women, and his letters are full of the most preposterous absurdities. Archery in the middle of February, on the bleak coast of East Lothian, must have been dismal pastime. The truth is, that ten days after the murder, Mary, with a few attendants, went to Seton for change of air, and left Huntley and *Bothwell* at Holyrood "to keep the prince unto her returning."[1] "The Queen's apologists," my friend continues, "are justified in holding that such a scene was much at variance with the usual decorum of her deportment, and the impartial will admit it to be inconsistent with her power of dissimulation: but there remains the consideration that she was then the victim of an infatuation which broke through all the defences of her strong nature."[2] Victim of infatuation indeed! Of course she was infatuated, if she behaved as she is alleged to have behaved. How does my friend reason? He has no difficulty in believing what he admits is a monstrous story, because the Queen was infatuated—her otherwise unaccountable and incomprehensible conduct being explained by her infatuation. But he cannot surely get the benefit of the infatuation until he proves that it existed; and when the proof is examined we find that it consists of these and similar inventions of the enemy. The sole proof of the infatuation are allegations which, except for the infatuation, would be incredible, and which are contradicted not only by their inherent incredibility, but by the real evidence that has been recovered.

My learned friend is disposed to make much of what may be called the popular conviction of the time. "A passionate instinct," he says, "divined their double guilt." But the passionate instinct did not divine Mary's guilt at least, for some time: it was not till a month later that the Queen's name was generally introduced.[3] These passionate popular instincts, more-

[1] The fact that Bothwell did not accompany the Queen to Seton, but remained in Edinburgh to take charge of the infant prince, is as clearly made out to the historical mind as any fact which occurred three centuries ago can well be. Mr Burton admits that the Diurnal of Occurrents is the best authority with regard to these events, and the passage quoted in the text is taken from the Diurnal. Yet Mr Burton, disregarding the conclusive evidence of the Diurnal for Drury's ridiculous gossip, calmly affirms that at Seton "she had for her court the ever-present Bothwell," &c. (iv. 355).

[2] Burton, iv. 356.

[3] Burton, iv. 361.

over, are in general sadly capricious and misdirected. If we choose to admit the validity of this test, we must conclude that Queen Elizabeth was the mistress of the Earl of Leicester, and that she aided him in the murder of Amy Robsart. Cecil, Elizabeth's own minister, distinctly asserted, in a well-known letter, that the popular belief was well founded. Nobody, I presume, now supposes that Elizabeth was Leicester's mistress; yet the allegation of Mary's guilty partiality for Bothwell rests upon testimony of a far less weighty kind. I have challenged my learned friends to produce a scrap of writing, dated before the murder of Darnley, tending to show that any man or woman in Scotland even so much as suspected that the Queen was enamoured of Bothwell. The occasional allusions to him that have been recovered refer exclusively to his political influence, —which was naturally distasteful to the English faction. The absence of any such reference is the more remarkable when we remember that Mary's most secret life was exposed to a vigilant and severe espionage, conducted by persons paid by Elizabeth's ministers, and whose voluminous correspondence, still accessible, has been eagerly ransacked by her accusers. Then, consider, gentlemen, how public opinion was formed in Edinburgh in the year 1567. The Queen, as we have seen, was surrounded by enemies who were incessantly defaming her. There were the Puritan fanatics, there were the Lords of the Congregation, there were the English partisans, inventing and circulating, day after day, calumnies against their sovereign. Why, gentlemen, is it not notorious that "the passionate instinct," in this case, was directed by men who were eager to divert suspicion from themselves, and who had joined the conspiracy with the deliberate intention of turning it to the injury of the Queen?

But, asks my learned friend, returning to weightier argument, if Mary was not the accomplice of Bothwell, why did she fail to prosecute the murderers of her husband? I may admit at once that no resolute effort was made to secure their punishment; but the reason is obvious. The greater part of the nobility were involved in the affair. Mary was conscious that every Lord of the Council was more or less compromised. Even had she been anxious to bring the assassins to justice, it would have been sheer madness to make the attempt. The trial of Bothwell was reluctantly forced upon the Council by the importunities of Lennox, and the acquittal was a matter of

form.[1] Still, in all this—observe—there is no evidence of that criminal complicity with a *lover* which is the sting of the accusation against the Queen.

At what particular juncture Bothwell was induced to raise his eyes to Mary, it is not now possible to ascertain. The air was full of rumours of treachery, and more than once Mary was warned that the Earl intended to carry her off. She treated the warnings with cold and characteristic contempt, declining to believe that the most faithful servant of the Crown could so readily forget his duty to his mistress.[2] There can be little doubt that even before the meeting of the Parliament in April the hardy mosstrooper had been in communication with several of the leading nobility on the subject of the Queen's marriage. It need not be doubted, for instance, that there were many dark secrets between Bothwell and his brother-in-law, Huntley. Had Huntley cared to tell all that he knew,

[1] Mr Burton says that Mary's correspondence with Lennox "is among the most significant of all the tell-tale documents of that crisis" (iv. 356). But it only proves (what we may take for granted) that Mary was more or less conscious that the proposal to remove Darnley, which had been made to her by the nobility, was directly or indirectly connected with the tragedy at Kirk o' Field.

[2] "*Never,*" Mr Burton says, "was wretched victim more distinctly and loudly warned of the gulf that was opening at her feet" (iv. 366). Yet the only distinct authority which he produces for this assertion is Melville's apocryphal story about Lord Herries. It will be well to recall what Robertson and Tytler thought of this story and of its author. "It is now known that Melville's correspondence in England lay more among the enemies of the Queen than her friends. . . . As to what he has ventured to assert, of Lord Herries' remonstrance on his knees to the Queen against the marriage, which, he says, was some time before she went to Stirling, on the 22d of April, we have pretty convincing evidence to the contrary of this fact. The bond of the association of the nobility was signed by Lord Herries among the rest; and we find the same nobleman a signing witness to the marriage articles, which soon followed. Dr Robertson candidly is willing to allow 'that perhaps Melville may have committed some mistake with regard to this fact, as far as relates to Lord Herries.' He adds: 'He could not well be mistaken with regard to what himself did.' True, indeed, he could not there mistake; but a pensionary of Queen Elizabeth, and the friend and partisan of Murray, could invent the whole from his own brain to vindicate the party, and to show his importance, as he has done on other occasions"—(*An Inquiry*, &c., page 279). Melville's narrative reads to me, I confess, rather like a practical joke of Lethington's devising. The whole story, so far at least as relates to his own escape, has a touch of burlesque about it.

he might have thrown a vivid light upon many of the bloody mysteries of the age. A few of the honester of the nobility appear to have been startled by Hepburn's presumption; but the rest either openly approved or silently acquiesced. Such a plot was, of course, very welcome to the faction which traded on the dishonour of the Queen. The least clear-headed of their number could not but be aware that, were Mary forced into a union with Bothwell, her authority would be at an end.

Bothwell was tried for the murder on the 12th of April, and on the evening of the 19th the memorable supper at Ainslie's Tavern took place. The supper appears to have been attended by all the influential members of the Parliament, which on that day had closed its sittings. After supper, Bothwell laid before the assembled Peers a paper, which he asked them to sign. The Peers, with the exception of Lord Eglinton, who "slipped away," complied with the request; and men like Argyle, Huntley, Cassilis, Morton, Boyd, Seton, Semple, and Herries, attached their names to a "band" by which they bound themselves to the utmost of their capacity to promote a marriage between the Queen and Bothwell. It may be safely asserted that no "warrant" from Mary was produced,—a fact the importance of which in connection with another branch of our inquiry cannot be overrated. It is difficult to fathom the motives which could have induced so many powerful nobles to approve a marriage which, in their hearts, they detested; but my learned friend is certainly not far wrong when he admits that several at least appended their signatures in deliberate treachery to tempt the Queen to ruin.

Two days afterwards, Mary went to Stirling. On her return she was seized by Bothwell in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh, and carried off to his castle of Dunbar. He at first pretended that she had been seized with the view of saving her from some imminent danger; but when they reached Dunbar the mask was dropped. Then the true object of the "ravishment" was disclosed. Her tears and reproaches were thrown away upon her captor. He assured her that he was passionately in love with her; and when she treated his audacious proposition with indignation, he produced the "band" which the nobility had signed. She was kept for a week a close prisoner in the castle. During all that time no hand was raised to set her

free. At last, after actual violence had been offered, she consented to become his wife.[1]

This explanation, gentlemen, which is in the main that offered by Mary herself, has been criticised at considerable length by my learned friend. He maintains that the apology is improbable and unnatural. Before examining his argument, however, let me bring my narrative to a close.

Some trifling preliminaries had to be gone through; Lady Jean required to be divorced;[2] the banns required to be

[1] Mr Green's account of these transactions (*A Short History of the English People*) absolutely bristles with blunders. "The Earl was married, but a shameless suit for his divorce removed this last obstacle to his ambition; and his seizure of the Queen as *she rode to Linlithgow* was followed three weeks afterwards *by their union at Dunbar*. In a month more all was over. . . . From Edinburgh she was carried a prisoner to the fortress of Lochleven; and her brother, the Earl of Murray, *was recalled from banishment* to accept the Regency of the realm." It need not be pointed out that Mary was *not* taken "as she rode to Linlithgow;" that her union with Bothwell did *not* take place "three weeks afterwards at Dunbar;" and that Murray was *not* "recalled from banishment" to accept the regency. After this it does not surprise us to learn that Mary married "Henry *Lennox*," and that the flower of the Spanish chivalry on board the Armada "foundered on a reef *near Dunblane*."—*A Short History of the English People*, pp. 353, 380, 412.

[2] Mr Burton admits that a great deal too much has been made of the revival of the Consistorial Court (iv. 380). It may be added that a good deal too much has also been made of the "Dispensation," enabling Bothwell to marry Lady Jean Gordon, which has recently been discovered by Mr Stuart of Edinburgh in the Charter-Room at Dunrobin. The antiquarian microscope has often a disturbing effect on the mental vision of its owner, and Mr Stuart appears to suppose that his discovery is likely to effect a final settlement of the Marian Controversy—(*A Lost Chapter in the History of Mary Queen of Scots Recovered:* Edinburgh, 1874). His argument appears to be that Mary must have known that a dispensation had been obtained, and that her marriage with Bothwell was null and void *ab initio*. Had she not been the victim of an overmastering infatuation, could she have placed herself in such an equivocal position? In the view I take of the stern compulsion under which Mary acted at this time, it is truly of no consequence whatever, whether she knew or did not know that a dispensation had been obtained. Amid the tremendous difficulties by which she was beset, a technical trifle of this kind was not likely to arrest her attention. The matter, I hold, is altogether irrelevant to the issue; but it may be noted: (1.) There is really no evidence to show that she was aware that a dispensation had been granted. (2.) Bothwell was divorced from his wife by a competent court, on the ground of infidelity, as well as of consanguinity. (3.) The decree dissolving

published; but on the 15th of May the marriage was celebrated at Holyrood. The nobles who had lured Bothwell on were already mustering their vassals, and on June 7th the Queen and her husband were forced to quit the palace and make for Borthwick. But they were surrounded before they had had time to rest, and it was with the utmost difficulty that, eluding the pursuers, they managed to reach Dunbar. It is said that Mary, had she chosen, might at this time have quitted Bothwell, and my friend asks me to explain why (on the assumption of the Queen's innocence) she did not do so. On June 15th the forces of the Queen and of the Confederate Lords faced each other all day at Carberry Hill. There was no

the marriage on the ground of infidelity was by the law of Scotland a valid and effectual divorce. (4.) The decree declaring the nullity of the marriage on the ground of consanguinity was also a legal divorce. It is true that the decree might possibly have been reduced and set aside on the ground of fraud or collusion; but until it was reduced, the marriage which it professed to dissolve was legally at an end. Bothwell, at the time when he married Mary, was, in the estimation of the canon law, as well as of the law of Scotland, an unmarried man; and every lawyer in the kingdom, Catholic as well as Protestant, could have told the Queen that he might lawfully marry again. (5.) Little is known of the proceedings which took place in the action of divorce (the records of the court having been lost); but Mary, when alluding to the subject, states expressly that grounds other than consanguinity were pleaded. Bothwell's former marriage, she says in one letter, having been dissolved "for lauchful causis of consangunitie, and *utheris relevant;*" and in another, "the proces of divorce orderlie led for resolute causis of consangunitie and *utheris.*" What these "others" were, we have now no means of ascertaining. Moreover, as Mr Burton has suggested, there could have been no difficulty in maintaining a plea of consanguinity, founded on Bothwell's own misdeeds, and for which the papal dispensation had not provided.

If, therefore, my view of the law be correct, it is obvious that Mary had no substantial interest in ascertaining whether a dispensation had been obtained—it being sufficient for the protection of her honour, the satisfaction of her conscience, and the vindication of her civil status, that a divorce had been granted. It is amazing to me that a competent student like Mr Stuart, knowing what a farce dispensation had become in those days, should have thought it worth his while to bring to bear upon a wholly irrelevant discussion such a heavy battery of laborious learning. Readers who are interested in the early marriage law of Scotland may read, with possible profit, and certainly not without amusement, the sixth chapter of the late Mr John Riddell's work on *Peerage and Consistorial Law*—a work curious for its research, its extravagance, and its grotesque animosity.

fighting, however; an arrangement being come to by which Bothwell was permitted to return to Dunbar,[1] and Mary gave herself into the hands of those who, by their own account, had risen to release her from her ravisher. They took her back to Edinburgh—a banner bearing a picture of the mangled body of Darnley, with the words, "Judge and avenge my cause, O Lord!" blazoned upon it, being borne in front—and kept her a close prisoner in the Provost's house. It is alleged that during this time she succeeded in conveying a letter or message to Bothwell,[2] and to prevent the possibility of any further intercourse, as well as for greater security, she was conveyed, on the morning of the 17th, to the castle of Lochleven, near Kinross.

My friend contends that if Mary was not guilty, the languor and facility which she manifested after the murder, and again after the "ravishment," are utterly inconsistent with the marvellous ardour and energy of spirit which she had previously displayed. The argument, at a first glance, is extremely plausible; but I do not think that it is sound.

For at least a year after the murder of Rizzio Mary was hardly herself, either in body or mind. Her health was seriously shaken. Her confinement took place in July; in October or November she was for several days at the point of death; the young prince was baptised in December, and on that occasion the French ambassador found her "weeping sore," and complaining of "a grievous pain in her side:" in February the Marshal of Berwick informed Cecil that "she breaketh

[1] The industry of a Danish historian (Professor Frederick Schiern) has lately thrown some light upon the life led by Bothwell after he was separated from the Queen. I am not sure, indeed, that Professor Schiern's investigations are calculated to enhance the dramatic effects of the story. Bothwell's disappearance among the mists and storms of the Mare Tenebrosum always seemed to me to be an appropriate and artistic finish—like the finish of Don Giovanni. *There* we should have left him,—contending with such weird forces of sea and sky as David Scott summoned into shape out of the polar darkness. But though the mean details of his imprisonment and death are not very picturesque, they are curious and interesting, and increase the conviction, which grows stronger day by day, that this rough and ignorant moss-trooper could not have been the favoured lover of the most polished and brilliant woman of her age.

[2] The story appears to be universally discredited,—even Hume and the younger Tytler (both hostile to Mary) admitting that if such a letter existed it must have been fabricated.

much," and "is subject to frequent fainting fits." There can be no doubt, moreover, that the tragic events which she had witnessed had to a certain extent unnerved her, and increased the constitutional melancholy from which she frequently suffered. "Peradventure it might be better for me to die than to live," she had exclaimed before she sailed for Scotland; and many other speeches are recorded, which indicate that ever and again Mary lost heart. "I could wish to have died!" she said to her friend De Croc, when recovering from the fever she had caught at Jedburgh. On more than one occasion she expressed an anxious desire to quit Scotland, and return to the pleasant land where her happiest days had been spent,—once after the murder of Rizzio, again after the murder of Darnley. A deep despondency had taken possession of her. She began to comprehend the implacable character of the forces among which she was placed,—she felt the net closing round her,—she longed to escape from all this fraud and violence and intrigue. It is clear that a woman thus situated—unhinged both in body and mind—could not be expected to show that bold front to danger which in happier days had become her so well. The sorrowful and enfeebled woman who was seized by Bothwell at the Almond Bridge,[1] was a very different creature from the high-spirited girl who, with Darnley at her side, had scattered the Lords of the Congregation.

We might have supposed, gentlemen, had my learned friend's theory been correct, that Mary would have enjoyed at least one brief hour of happiness. She had stained her soul with murder. She had cast her good name to the winds. She had placed her crown in peril. For what? To enable her to gratify a frantic and absorbing passion. At length all ob-

[1] Mr Burton says that the ravishment took place at Fountainbridge, a district which is now within the boundaries of the city of Edinburgh, (iv. 377). Robert Chambers, in his *Domestic Annals of Scotland* (i. 40), had, I fancied, conclusively shown that it occurred at a spot between the Almond River and the Gogar Burn, where the post-road from Linlithgow to Edinburgh crosses the Almond by the Boat-house Bridge. See the authorities quoted, more particularly the remission to Andrew Redpath for his being concerned "in besetting the Queen's way near the water of Awmond." "It is," says Mr Chambers, "perhaps of all places on the road from Linlithgow to Edinburgh, that which Bothwell might be expected to choose if he had been in no collusion with the Queen, and anxious to take her at advantage."

stacles were removed, and the lovers were united. In such a union there would have been much to darken the horizon of love: but if it had been a union of hearts, she would certainly have obtained one transitory glimpse of rapture. Yet, on the very day of her marriage, she was found weeping disconsolately, and longing only for death; and her demeanour throughout these melancholy nuptials was sad and sombre. It is clear that she had braced herself for the trial; but she was very wretched, and she was unable to conceal her wretchedness.

"Such incidents," says my learned friend, "are serviceable to those who hold that the unhappy woman was the mere helpless victim of fraud and force—a sort of realisation of the old stories about giants and enchanters, or of the romances with the tyrant lord, who, gifted with powers almost as preternatural, seizes and imprisons the doomed princess. But there is another cause for such phenomena, with which the daily world is unfortunately more familiar—the woman with many gifts, and the one fatal weakness that induces her to throw them at the feet of an unworthy object; the victim of a blind imperious passion, giving herself over, body and soul, to one so thoroughly selfish and brutal, that no attachment or gratitude, no prudential restraint, will even for a brief space suspend the impulses of his sensual and tyrannical nature." [1]

How is it possible to reason against such reasoning? At one moment the victim is impelled by infatuated devotion, at another by overpowering terror. Nay, at the very same moment she is the slave of her lust and of her loathing. Her heart to-day is as hard as diamond, to-morrow as plastic as wax. How can we handle this Proteus of a woman who assumes such strange and intangible disguises,—who laughs in her dire distress, and whose salt tears are the expression of nuptial delight?

But even if Mary had been herself, it is difficult to see what she could have done to avert the marriage. Assuming that she was ignorant of Bothwell's intention to capture her, and that she was carried to Dunbar against her will, what door of escape was open to her? The "band" assured her that all the great houses approved of the marriage. The name of almost every peer of distinction was attached to it. And then the outrage was exactly of the kind which is calculated to paralyse

[1] Burton, iv. 416.

and render helpless the most high-spirited of women. "Let the offence be condoned—let the scandal be covered—let as little be said about it as may be,"—that is what ninety-nine women out of every hundred would have urged. The instinct of the feminine heart in such cases counsels silence. Even if actual violence was not used, the honour of Mary had been cruelly compromised. "Leave me if you like," Bothwell might have said; "but what will the world think of the Queen who has secluded herself for a week in the society of the most dissolute of her subjects, who to gratify her passion has cast her good name and her fair reputation to the winds?" To have accepted the alternative would have demanded an almost heroic amount of moral courage from the victim; and Mary at the moment, as we have seen, was sick both in body and soul.

My learned friend affirms that the fidelity with which Mary clung to Bothwell after the marriage supplies the best possible evidence that she was attached to him. The assertion that she clung to him in this tenacious way has not been proved, and rests at best upon very questionable rumour. Mary had told Lethington that she would follow Bothwell round the world in a white petticoat,—so at least some one had heard somebody say.[1] But the time at which the expression was used (if it was used—which I do not believe), deprives it of any importance. It was when Mary, thrilling with resentment at the indignities offered to her, was being ignominously carried into Edinburgh. There was a certain loyalty and faithfulness in her nature which prevented her from deserting those who, to use a vulgar phrase, were in the same boat with her. The woman who had never loved Bothwell in his prosperous days, may have clung courageously to him in his adversity. And the perfidious hypocrisy which the Confederate Lords were then exhibiting must have been positively revolting to a nature like Mary's. These were the men who had truly murdered Darnley, and yet they dared to flaunt a banner in the face of heaven which called for vengeance on his murderers—"Judge and avenge my cause, O Lord!" When she found that Bothwell's accomplices had turned upon him, like a pack of famished wolves, it is not difficult to understand how in utter tearless shame and indignation she might have told them that he was a better man than any of them. But, as I have said, there is

[1] This expression is alleged to have been used on a different occasion.

no good evidence to show that Mary parted from Bothwell reluctantly, and there is plenty of the best evidence to show that after they were parted she never manifested the slightest desire to rejoin him.[1] He passed away utterly out of her life. The delirium under which she is alleged to have laboured must have been very transitory in its nature.

Now, gentlemen, let me condense into one or two sentences the results at which we have arrived. We have seen that, constitutionally, Mary was not a person likely to come under the sway of a violent and absorbing passion. Her whole nature was masculine in its moderation, its firmness, its magnanimity. She was tolerant, uncapricious, capable of carrying out a purpose steadily, yet with tact and policy. She was never hysterical, never fanciful. With her, love was not an engrossing occupation; on the contrary, to Mary, as to most men, it was but the child and plaything of unfrequent leisure. Her lovers went mad about her, but she never went mad about her lovers. She sent Chatelar to the scaffold. She saw Sir John Gordon beheaded. She admitted Rizzio to a close intimacy. Rizzio was her intellectual mate, the depository of her state secrets, her politic guide and confidant: but the very notoriety of her intercourse with him showed how innocent and unsexual it was in its nature,—the frank companionship of friendly statesmen. Had she been Rizzio's mistress, nay, even had love in the abstract been a more important matter to her than it was, she would have been more cautious and discreet: however important the public business which they were transacting might have been, she would hardly have kept the Italian secretary in her boudoir half the night. Her marriage with Darnley was not exclusively a love-match: it was a marriage to which her judgment, as well as her heart, consented. Her love-letters

[1] Throgmorton, writing on 18th July to Queen Elizabeth, says that he had advised Mary to obtain a divorce from Bothwell, and that she would not consent. But the reason which she assigned for her reluctance to sue for a divorce at that time (assuming that she was speaking the truth, or believed that she was speaking the truth) was quite satisfactory. Mr Stuart says that "the Queen's resolution to adhere to Bothwell, and to resist all proposals of a divorce from him, was maintained till the project of her marriage to the Duke of Norfolk was broached in October 1568." I do not know of any documents which support this strong assertion—those quoted by Mr Stuart certainly do not.—*A Lost Chapter in the History of Mary Queen of Scots Recovered*, p. 35-38.

abound in pretty trifles: her business letters are clear, strong, rapid, brilliantly direct. By the fantastic irony of fate this masculine unsentimental career has been translated into an effeminate love-story,—the truth being, as I have had to say again and again, that no woman ever lived to whom love was less of a necessity. This was the strength of Mary's character as a queen—as a woman, its defect. A love-sick girl, when her castle in the air was shattered, might have come to hate Darnley with a feverish feminine hatred; but the sedate and politic intelligence of the Queen could only have been incidentally affected by such considerations. She knew that, even at the worst, Darnley was a useful ally, and the motives which induced her to marry him must have restrained her from putting him forcibly away. Yet when the deed was done, it is not surprising that she should have acquiesced in the action of the nobility. Bothwell, again, was in her estimation a loyal retainer, a trusted adviser of the Crown; but he was nothing more. Yet it need not surprise us that after her forcible detention at Dunbar, she should have resolved to submit with a good grace to the inevitable. Saving Argyle and Huntley, Bothwell was the most powerful of her peers. He was essentially a strong man; fit, it seemed, to rule that turbulent nobility. He had been recommended to her acceptance by the unanimous voice of the aristocracy, Protestant and Catholic. As the honest Craig observed, "the best part of the realm did approve it, either by flattery or by their silence." On a woman of ardent sentimentality these considerations would have had little effect: they were exactly the considerations which would appeal to Mary's masculine common-sense. Yet, though she made what seemed to her the best of a bad business, she was very wretched: apart from her own private grief and chagrin, she felt that the task in hand (marvellous as her powers of self-recovery had hitherto proved) was too great for her strength. A corrupt combination of treachery and ambition had wrecked the fair promise of her life.

This, I venture to say, is a consistent and credible delineation; what, on the other hand, gentlemen, does my learned friend require you to believe?

The woman whom he has presented to you had led a highly successful, adroit, diplomatic life for five years, when suddenly she gave way to a blind, irrational, and devastating passion for

a man whom she had known from childhood, which upset her reason, tore her fine-spun web in pieces, traversed the splendid career which a haughty and resolute ambition had marked out. She was borne away on a wave of furious and brutal lust, which left her helplessly imbecile, for the first time and the last time in her life, during an interval of six weeks! The astonishing pranks that human nature plays are known to all of us, and the cold deliberate treachery of a woman on fire with passion has not been unrepresented in dramatic art: but anything so incredible as this story, or, when taken in connection with the admitted facts of Mary Stuart's character, anything so anomalous and incomprehensible, I have not met with in history.

Gentlemen, in constructing the picture of Mary Stuart which I have presented to you, I have availed myself of every legitimate source of information. But he who would arrive at tolerably safe conclusions about this remarkable career, is called upon to appraise, with critical exactness and vigilance, an immense mass of documentary evidence. A good deal of that evidence is sufficiently reliable to be accepted without qualification by the cautious historian: a good deal of it can be accepted only after it has been sifted and winnowed and attested by independent authority: a good deal of it must be laid aside as unauthentic and worthless. I include in the first class whatever evidence from neutral sources is extant (and of it I need say no more here): I include in the second the letters and despatches and histories which were prepared by the enemies of the Queen, for the information of the English Government, for their own vindication, or for other purposes: the third includes the depositions of Nicolas Hubert (French Paris), and a series of documents known as the Casket Letters.

In dealing with the second class, I have endeavoured to proceed upon the ordinary principles which guide the critical interpreter of historical records. The source is to a certain extent tainted, and therefore, except when the witness records what he himself observed, or where the hearsay which he reports is otherwise corroborated, his narrative is to be received with critical watchfulness. For instance, in a letter from Randolph to Cecil, dated February 7, 1566, the writer says that Mary had signed the Catholic League. But on February 14, Bedford informs the English minister that she had not done

so. In Randolph's letter it is stated that France was a party to the League: in Bedford's letter there is no mention of France. In point of fact, France was at that time standing warily aloof from the combination; and as Bedford's letter was subsequent in date, and as he appears to have written with Randolph's latest despatches before him, it may fairly be concluded that Randolph, in the one case as in the other, had been originally misinformed. It is nowhere else, in any contemporary document, asserted or implied that Mary had joined the League: and history, therefore, is entitled to hold that she was not a member of the Catholic Confederacy. Or take another example. In a letter from Drury it is stated, that as Bothwell rode off to the Tolbooth on the morning of his trial, the Queen gave him a friendly nod from the window of the palace. But in a previous letter, which contained the narrative given to Drury by an eyewitness of the scene (the Provost-Marshal of Berwick), no notice is taken of this incident. On the contrary, the Provost-Marshal was denied an audience on the ground that the Queen was asleep; and it is therefore highly improbable that, had she been visible at the window of the palace, this flagrant evidence of discourtesy to the English envoy would have been omitted. In these circumstances the historical student cannot undertake to affirm that such an incident occurred. Sir William Drury himself was, as I have said, the most credulous of gossips, and his letters are stuffed full of marvels that might satisfy the most voracious appetite for the supernatural. Randolph was an able diplomatist, but a harsh and unscrupulous partisan: and, in fact, the whole of this English correspondence, from the date of the Darnley marriage, was conceived in a spirit of bitter hostility to the Queen.

The only documents produced by my learned friend which I absolutely refuse to entertain, are the second deposition of French Paris, and the Casket Letters.[1] Only one word upon

[1] Dr Robertson, who urges the arguments *against* Mary with conspicuous force and dexterity, virtually abandons Hubert and his depositions. He says: "It must be acknowledged that his depositions contain some improbable circumstances. He seems to have been a foolish talkative fellow: the fear of death, the violence of torture, and the desire of pleasing those in whose power he was, tempted him, perhaps, to feign some circumstances, and to exaggerate others. To say that some circumstances in an affadavit are improbable or false, is very

the former is needed. Hubert's depositions were emitted before Buchanan, but Buchanan never publicly referred to them, did not use them either in the *Detectio* or in his *History*, and their existence was unknown until one hundred and fifty years later, when they were discovered in the Register Office. Buchanan was not particularly scrupulous; and the fact that he abstained from using these ugly documents shows that he was conscious that they would not bear investigation. There are many suspicious circumstances connected with all the depositions then taken, which go to show that they were subjected to a somewhat severe process of revision by the party in power; but it is enough to say at present that the only one which seriously compromised the Queen was Hubert's second deposition. The first which he emitted did not implicate her, and in the first he may possibly have told the plain truth. But he was afterwards warned,—"Bring the Queen's name into your narrative. If you make her guilty, you may save your neck." And he brought her in with a vengeance,—inventing exactly such a story as a vulgar indecent knave might be expected to invent —a story so incredible in the coarseness of soul and the brutality of manners which it attributes to the most accomplished lady of the age, that even George Buchanan was afraid to use it.[1]

different from saying that the whole is forged. I suspect the former to be the case here; but I see no appearance of the latter. Be that as it will, some of the most material facts in Paris's affidavits rest upon his single testimony; and for that reason I have not in the history, nor shall I in this place, lay any stress upon them." (*A Critical Dissertation concerning the Murder of King Henry, and the genuineness of the Queen's Letters to Bothwell.* By William Robertson, D.D.) Tytler has pointed out that Hume's note to his first edition, in which he alleged that Hubert's dying confession was "a regular judicial paper given in regularly and judicially," and that "it was in vain now to seek improbabilities, and magnify the smallest difficulty into a contradiction," was withdrawn from later editions,—from which it may be fairly inferred that he had changed his mind. (*An Inquiry, Historical and Critical.* Third edition, p. 177).

[1] Lesley alleges that it was well known at the time that, directly before his execution, Paris admitted that he had not conveyed any letters from the Queen to Bothwell. Paris was executed at St Andrews on 15th August 1569. "From that the Regent passed to Sainctandrois, where a notable sorcerer, called Nic Neville, was condemnit to the death and brunt: and a Frenchman callit Paris, who was ane of the devisers of the king's death, was hanget in Sanctandrois, and with him

The authenticity of the Casket Letters is a question that must be more deliberately considered. But, gentlemen, I shall somewhat shorten your labours by directing your attention almost exclusively to what is known as the Glasgow Letter or Letters. This is the letter which, if wholly written by Mary, and addressed by her to Bothwell, can leave little doubt on any reasonable mind that she was a murderess and adulteress. On the other hand, if this letter be spurious, it follows, as a matter of course, that the letters which were produced at the same time, and which must stand or fall along with it, (and which are, besides, of quite secondary importance), do not require to be separately examined. Prove that one of the documents is forged, and you discredit the rest: for if it was possible to forge one, it was possible to forge all.

It is in this light that the disappearance of the alleged Warrant from the Queen becomes of such surpassing importance. There can be no doubt that the Confederate Lords privately exhibited to Elizabeth's commissioners at York what they averred to be a warrant from the Queen requiring the nobles assembled at Ainslie's Tavern to sign the famous "band." The Lords alleged that this document was (along with the others) found in the silver casket. If such a document existed, its production against Mary would have been positively fatal. The authenticity of the other documents might be challenged. They had been seen by Bothwell alone. But here was a document which had been perused by all the chief nobility of the kingdom. Yet at the solemn Conference at Westminster the Warrant was not produced. It was never shown, except surreptitiously at York. Now, the Warrant produced at York was either written by Mary or it was not. If it was written by Mary, it is impossible to believe that such a damnatory piece of evidence would have been afterwards withdrawn by the Lords: if it was not written by Mary, it was forged, and the Lords did not produce it at the *public* Conference because they knew that the fraud would be immediately detected, and summarily exposed. We are thus driven to conclude that the Warrant was forged, and then the question recurs—If one, why not all? I believe that I might rest my case against the Casket Letters on

William Stewart, Lyon King of Arms, for divers points of witchcraft and necromancy."—*Historie of King James the Sext.*

this single fact—the mysterious and otherwise unaccountable disappearance of the Warrant;[1] but I consent, gentlemen, to meet my friend on his own ground, and I select, with this view, the most damaging of the documents which the Lords actually ventured to lay before the English Council.

These letters, as my friend has told you, were said to have been taken from a silver casket which had belonged to Francis, Mary's first husband, and which were found by Morton in the possession of George Dalglish, one of Bothwell's retainers. The casket at least was genuine (so much may be admitted), and it was a stroke of genius to *find* the documents in a case which so plainly, nay dramatically, pointed to the Queen. There were, besides the Glasgow and Stirling letters, two contracts of marriage, some verses, and one or two letters which (as I think may be gathered from their contents) had been addressed to Darnley. These letters and verses are possibly in the main genuine; the Lords had enjoyed abundant opportunity to ransack the private repositories of the writer and her correspondent; and, assuming that it was intended to forge an incriminating letter, it was obviously advisable to shuffle it up, and pass it off, along with writings that were genuine. It was advisable for two reasons, —(1.) Because the attention of those examining the letters would be diverted from a close, exclusive, and dangerous examination of the fabricated document; and (2.) Because, assuming that the forgery was not palpable, the genuine letters would incline the mind to accord a readier reception to the other. The sonnets are very indifferent, and unworthy of Mary who could write fair verse. If she was the authoress, as is by no means impossible, they were probably written at an earlier period of life, and are to be regarded as the mere play of imaginative idleness. There is nothing very special or individual about the feelings which they portray, and nothing to connect them, directly or indirectly, with a frantic passion for *Bothwell*. Hundreds of erotic poems have been devoted to the treatment of a precisely similar theme,—the misery of the love which, by unpropitious destiny, is divided from its object. The notion of

[1] Buchanan afterwards, when writing his *History* (book xviii.), naively admitted that no writing of the Queen was shown to the nobles before the band was signed. Yet Buchanan was one of the commissioners at York! After this it is amazing to find Mr Burton asserting that the existence of the Warrant is still "disputed" (iv. 375).

the Queen during these stormy agitated months sitting calmly down in her boudoir, and scribbling pages of indifferent French poetry, is not one that will be readily accepted. The poetical language of a soul ablaze with passion would have been very different.

I hope, gentlemen, that I have made it clear that, if my friend's accusation is true, Mary during a few weeks of her life behaved in a way utterly inconsistent with the whole of her previous and with the whole of her subsequent career. He himself will be ready to admit as much; but he will account for it by assuming that a violent unreasoning infatuation mastered and upset this ordinarily astute and politic intellect. It is obvious, however, that the evidence by which an assertion, more or less incredible, is recommended to our minds, must be ample. A miracle, I suppose, is capable of being proved; but it requires far more proof to convince us that a man rose from the dead than to convince us that he died. But, gentlemen, I have shown you that the only testimony in support of what my friend admits to be an anomalous and abnormal event in Mary Stuart's history, are the *two or three* letters found in the casket.[1] Even if this evidence was unimpeachable in quality, you will admit, looking to the inherent improbability of the story, that it is somewhat limited in quantity. And I undertake to convince you before I sit down that the testimony on which the Queen of Scotland is to be convicted of adultery and murder would not be admitted in any court of justice to prove a petty theft.

Contemporary letters, says my learned friend, are often the most important evidence that the historian can obtain. They may be implicitly relied on, and it will not do two hundred years after their date to maintain that they are forgeries. Had the casket with its contents been accidentally discovered to-day,

[1] The number of writings alleged to have been recovered in the casket varied considerably—in a receipt granted by the Earl of Morton to the Privy Council, dated 22d January 1570-71, they number not less than twenty-one. In 1824, "the long-missing originals from the gilt casket" were given to the world in a bulky volume, by Hugh Campbell, LL.D., F.A.S., entitled *The Love Letters of Mary Queen of Scots.* After the book was printed, it appears to have been pointed out to the author that the letters were forgeries; but he persisted in publishing the volume and maintaining the authenticity of the documents—and, indeed, they are quite as credible as most of those published in the *Detectio.*

it would have been difficult to resist the application of my friend's proposition. But the Casket Letters stand in a peculiar position. They were produced by Mary's enemies with the avowed object of insuring her condemnation. They were produced as evidence at what was in effect a criminal trial. Their genuineness was challenged at the time by the Queen's friends, and was emphatically denied by the Queen herself.[1] There is an air of unconscious veracity and *abandon* about the old letter which the historical inquirer accidentally brings to light. But the Casket Letters come from a tainted source, and are very *conscious*. They are not historical documents, in the legitimate sense of the term, and cannot be received as such; on the contrary, having been used as evidence in a contemporary suit, all the usual rules applicable to the admission of evidence ought to have been, and may now without unfairness be, applied to them.

There are two equivocal events—and two only—in Mary's life, —her share in the murder of Darnley, and her consent to the Bothwell marriage. By equivocal, I mean capable, in so far as ascertained facts are concerned, of being read in *two* ways. She might have been either the conspirator or the victim of the conspiracy. Now the Casket Letters are devoted exclusively to these two events, and they remove all dubiety about their true character. Their brilliant light dispels the darkness. By some extraordinary coincidence the letters which oblige us to read these events in the way unfavourable to the Queen were placed in the same casket. Of the many letters which, in any view of their relations, Mary must have addressed to Bothwell, those only were discovered in the casket which were *needed* by her accusers to establish their accusation. This was rare luck—almost incredible good fortune. In fact, it suggests something more than good fortune,—it suggests *design*.

Now, gentlemen, my learned friend is very indignant that the charge of tampering with letters should be brought against the Protestant nobility of Scotland. I am afraid that in an age prolific of forgery, it would hardly have been resented with the same warmth.[2] It was not necessary that Murray should be a

[1] Burton, iv. 437, 438-43. I am surprised, after what occurred at the Conferences, that Mr Burton should assert that the theory of forgery was not put forward until after any appeal to the original documents had ceased to be practicable. (See *infra*, p. 70.)

[2] The Earl of Morton fairly admits that he had no scruples on this

party to the deceit. The letters were prepared in his absence, and he had merely to believe what he was told. The master-wit of Lethington was there to shape the plot; Lethington, with numberless scraps of the Queen's handwriting in his possession, and with a divine or diabolic spark of genius in his nature, which might have made him on a larger theatre one of the leaders of mankind. To produce a passable imitation of Mary's handwriting was an easy matter. Her letters were written in that Italian style which she was the first to practise in Scotland, and which plainly distinguishes her manuscripts from the ordinary Gothic writing of the period. One disadvantage of such a marked peculiarity was, that it could be imitated even by an unskilful performer without exciting suspicion. There were no slight and subtle peculiarities of style that needed to be carefully reproduced; if a general resemblance to the new mode of writing were retained, it was sure to pass current with men who were not very skilful with their pens, and who saw that it bore a much closer resemblance to the Queen's handwriting than to their own. The severity of the enactments against the crime prove, I think, not only that forgery was prevalent, but that forged documents obtained ready currency,—a state of matters accounted for by the fact, that while a small minority of priests and lawyers were highly accomplished, the bulk of the community was illiterate.

My friend interrupts me. The Confederate Lords, he says, when the charge of conspiracy is brought against them, are entitled to the benefit of all the doubts which are claimed for the Queen.[1] Is this true? The Queen was accused of the murder of Darnley by men who were undoubtedly Bothwell's accomplices in the murder. What a volume of falsehood, fraud, and perfidy is here unclosed! Their whole conduct was a *lie*,—they were pursuing another for a crime which they had themselves committed. When the criminal becomes the accuser, a false colour is necessarily imparted to the charge. These men, I maintain, are entitled to the benefit of no doubts. They were traitors and hypocrites, and we are bound to presume that in playing their

subject. A letter having been received from Denmark regarding Bothwell, containing statements which could not be conveniently published, the Earl describes, with the utmost frankness, how he and his friends had altered and manipulated it to suit their purpose.—Goodall, ii. 383.

[1] Burton, iv. 444.

game they would not hesitate to employ any of the weapons which hypocrites and traitors use.

I propose to satisfy you, gentlemen, that those letters or the portions of those letters which incriminate the Queen were not written by her. The external evidence, consisting mainly of the circumstances which attended their discovery and production, and the internal, including all those indications of authorship which appeal to the critic and philologist, must be alike carefully considered. Both, to a certain extent, are relevant to our inquiry. The jurist, as a general rule, seeks to exclude writings which rest upon *internal* evidence only. Internal evidence is too slight, too deceptive, too fragile, to be readily accepted as a guide in a court of law. Universal experience has convinced the makers of law that no document should be even looked at until it is proved to be that which it professes to be. A false witness may break down and speak the truth when placed in the witness-box; but we cannot cross-examine a statement made in writing. From the peculiarities of this case, however, the learned judge has ruled that, in the meantime—however deplorably defective the external evidence may be—he would not be justified in withdrawing these letters entirely from your consideration; and it is therefore necessary that I should lay before you briefly the whole evidence, internal and external, which demonstrates beyond the possibility of reasonable doubt, that they were not written by Mary.

The observations which I have to offer on the internal evidence need not detain us for many minutes. If you will take the trouble to read any half-dozen of the genuine letters written by the Queen, and then compare them with the Glasgow letters, you will see that the two series must have been composed by different persons. Mary's letters, as a rule, are refined in tone, elegant in expression, harmonious in texture and composition. The Glasgow letters are coarse, awkward, and the merest patchwork. Why, a rustic wench trying painfully to write a letter to her sweetheart would have succeeded better! My friend has discovered that among the numerous letters written by Mary, which have been preserved, another coarse one exists—which is true; but he forgets that it is less a letter than a piece of bitter invective meant to wound Elizabeth to the quick. Then he cannot deny that Mary possessed at least a singular felicity of expression of which there is no trace what-

ever in the Glasgow letter. How uncouth and ungraceful it is! It contains one or two impressive sentences; but these, if not transparently histrionic, are clearly over-studied and over-vehement,—tragic passages from some of the minor dramatists—not Shakespeare, surely! "Have ye not desire to laugh to see me lie so well?" is a sentiment which neither Mary nor Shakespeare would have uttered. A woman like Mary, taking such murderous work on hand, would have gone to the end with resolute sternly shut lips, feeling the degradation of her treachery too keenly to boast of it, even to her lover. My learned friend has artfully strung together the most striking passages; let me ask you to listen to one or two of the sentences which he has omitted: "I am weary, and am asleep; and yet I cannot forbear scribbling as long as there is any paper. Cursed be this pocky fellow that troubleth me thus much, for I had a pleasanter matter to discourse unto you but for him! He is not much the worse, but he is much marked. I thought I should have been killed with his breath, for it is worse than your uncle's breath; and yet I was set no nearer to him than in a chair by his bolster, and he lieth at the farther side of the bed. I had forgotten of the L—— of Livingston that he at supper said softly to the Lady Reres that he drank to the persons I knew of, if I would pledge them. And after supper he said softly to me, *when I was leaning upon him and warming myself*, 'You may well go and see sick folk, yet can you not be so welcome unto them as you have this day left somebody in pain, who shall ne'er be merry until he hath seen you again.' I asked him who it was, *He took me about the body*, and said, 'One of his folks that hath left you this day.' Guess you the rest." [1]

[1] Mr Burton thus skilfully skims over this disgusting passage: "She had almost forgotten to say, that in presence of the Lady Reres at supper, Livingston had rallied her on the sorrowful condition in which she had left a certain person at a distance" (iv. 429). It is simply incomprehensible to me how a man of taste and accomplishment like the late lamented Canon Kingsley could bring himself to write about such foul rubbish in this fashion:—

"The strongest evidence in favour of the letters and sonnets is to be found in their tone. A forger in those coarse days would have made Mary write in some Semiramis or Roxana vein, utterly alien to the tenderness, the delicacy, the pitiful confusion of mind, the conscious weakness, the imploring and most feminine trust, which makes the

But the fragmentary character of this epistle is perhaps its most curious feature. The different paragraphs of which it consists can hardly be said to be joined together in any real sense. The unity of organic life, which works from within outward, bringing each detail into orderly subjection to the whole, and which no forger could imitate, is entirely wanting. In the first place, we have a paragraph of plain business-like description which might have been addressed to the Council (as perhaps it was)—the description of the journey to Glasgow, and her reception there. In the second place, there is a paragraph devoted to a curiously and incomprehensibly minute relation (incomprehensible except in one view) of the conversations which had taken place between herself and Darnley. In the third place, there are some passionate explosions of love and

letters to those who—as I do—believe in them, more pathetic than any fictitious sorrows which poets could invent. More than one touch, indeed, of utter self-abasement is so unexpected, so subtle, and yet so true to the heart of woman, that—as has been well said—if it was invented there must have existed in Scotland an earlier Shakespeare."—*Health and Education*, by Charles Kingsley, Canon of Westminster.

The touches of utter self-abasement which occur once or twice in the letters—"You make me dissemble so far that I hate it"—"I remit me altogether to your pleasure"—are, to my mind, I confess, the most signal evidence that they were not written by the Queen. Mary was the last woman in the world who would have prostrated herself in abject submission at the feet of a lover. The whole tone of mind which these passages disclose is so unlike anything that we know of Mary in every other experience of her life, that we are entitled to say that it is morally impossible she could have written them. Then there is another aspect of the matter which, so far as I am aware, has not been commented on. If the letters are Mary's, and if they prove anything, it is that the writer stood in mortal terror of her correspondent. Where or how had Bothwell acquired this tremendous power over her? Was it love or fear that made her grovel before him? Not fear, certainly, even her enemies will admit; and then of any overmastering passion for Bothwell on Mary Stuart's part, there is no trace anywhere else in her life. Is it possible that such a consuming flame could have been hidden out of sight? Is it possible that Mary could have become the humble slave of Bothwell's ambition without some indication of the state of matters being made more or less public? without some remains of the ravage of this devouring fire being visible in her after-life? Observe, moreover, that the sentiment itself is common enough—the idea of the woman who is ready to yield up her soul and everything else to her lover, being as old as the oldest poetry—and the execution is not above commonplace, if we except one or two finely simple sentences, which might have been extracted from some old popular romance, as perhaps they were.

remorse. In the fourth place, there is a table of contents. In the fifth place, there is the interjected paragraph about Lord Livingston—eminently nasty. In the sixth place, there are further explosions. In the seventh place, there is an apology for the *peculiarity* of the handwriting (what does that suggest, gentlemen?)—"Excusez mon ignorance à escrier—excusez la briefueté des caractères." And in the last place, there is another table of contents applicable to the second part of the letter, applicable, at least, if one remarkable exception is made. For, in the abstract or index this unaccountable intimation (unaccountable on the assumption that the letter was addressed to Bothwell) appears—"Remember me of the Lord Bothwell!"

This is a wonderful jumble, an incomprehensible muddle—hardly to be accounted for on any rational hypothesis. It might almost appear as if the forgers had got hold of some half-finished memoranda by Mary, and adding a beginning and an end, had transformed them into a letter to Bothwell. I tell you honestly, gentlemen, that it is the very singularity of this letter which embarrasses me, for it is difficult to suppose that an ordinarily clever forger would have produced such an extraordinary piece of patchwork. But, of course, I am not bound to explain the reasons which induced Mary's enemies to act as they did in fabricating the letter,—it is enough for me to say that no fairly intelligent man—except upon external evidence of an absolutely irresistible kind—can be required to believe that this is a love-letter addressed to Bothwell by the Queen. It is conceivable that such a document may have been patched up and put together by the men who conspired against the Queen, and who were driven by the imperious instinct of self-preservation to justify in any way and by any means what they had done: it is inconceivable that such a document could have been addressed by Mary Stuart to Bothwell, or to any man with whom she was rapturously in love. I venture to say that such another love-letter as this never existed.

My learned friend, for his part, does not hesitate to discover in certain notable peculiarities of these monstrous compositions, evidence of their genuineness. "No forger," he says, "would have ventured to introduce such a multitude of petty allusions into a fabricated document, nor, after fabricating one document sufficient to damn the Queen to all eternity, would he have

gone on to fabricate others."[1] Neither of these considerations appears to me to be of any weight. Every reader of Murray's letter in which he inventories the documents produced, must feel that an impressive effect is produced by his "Item," "Item," "Item." Repetition is a powerful advocate. The moral impression produced by a multitude of witnesses is undoubted. The individual value of the evidence of each may be inconsiderable; the cumulative effect is great. The resistance of the mind is gradually worn away by the succession of blows until conviction is produced. It would have been stupid as well as dangerous to have perilled the accusation against the Queen on a single *billet-doux*.

Then it may be conceded—as regards the alleged minuteness of detail in the celebrated Glasgow letter—that a clever forger would have *invented* as little as possible. But if the details were supplied to him on good authority, it would obviously be his cue to introduce them freely. These slight sketchy touches, these incidental allusions to trifles, add wonderfully to the colour and reality of a narrative. Now it is to be observed that the minute touches to which my friend alludes are found in those portions of the letters which report the conversations between Darnley and the Queen. It is a remarkable fact that another report of these conversations is in existence. Robert Crawfurd was in attendance on Darnley at Glasgow, and in compliance with a request from Lennox he noted down at the time the substance of the conversations which were related to him by Darnley, as having passed between his master and the Queen. Here, then, is Mary's alleged report to Bothwell on the one hand, and Crawfurd's report (obtained through Darnley) on the other. The similarity between the two is astounding; they are absolutely identical. Compare at your leisure, gentlemen, the two passages I am about to read, and then consider whether the one must not have been literally copied from the other:—

THE DEPOSITION OF CRAWFURD.	THE ALLEGED LETTER OF THE QUEEN.
"Ye asked me what I ment bye the crueltye specified in my lettres; yat proceedethe of yow onelye, that wille not accept mye offres	"Ye ask me quhat I mene be the crueltie conteint in my letter; it is of yow alone, that will not accept my offeris and repentance.

[1] Froude, viii. 353; Burton, iv. 425.

and repentance. I confesse that I have failed in som thingis, and yet greater fakltes have bin made to yow sundrye tymes, which ye have forgiven. I am but yonge, and ye will saye ye have forgiven me diverse tymes. Maye not a man of mye age, for lacke of counsell, of which I am very destitute, falle twise or thrise, and yets repent, and be chastised bye experience? If I have made any faile that ye wul think a faile, howsoever its be, I crave your pardone, and protest that I shall never faile againe. I desire no other thinge but that we may be together as husband and wife. And if ye will not consent hereto, I desire never to rise futhe from this bed. Therefore, I pray yow, give me an answer hereunto. God knoweth how I am punished for making mye god of yow, and for having no other thought but on yow. And if at ainie tyme I offend yow, ye are the cause; for that when one offendethe me, if for mye refuge I might open mye minde to yow, I would speak to no other; but when ainie thing is spoken to me, and ye and I not beinge as husband and wife ought to be, necessitee compelleth me to kepe it in my brest," &c.

I confess that I have faillit, but not into that quhilk I ever decepit; and sickly be hes faillit to sindrie of your subjectis, quhilk ye have forgiven. I am young. Ye will say that ye have forgiven me oft-tymes, and yits yat I return my faultis. May not ane man of my age, for lacke of counsell, fall troyse or thyrse, or in lack of his promeis, and at lasts repent himself, and be chasnit be experience? And if I may obtain pardoun, I proteste I shall never mak faulte agane. And I craif na uther thing bot gat we may be at bed and buird togidder as husband and wyfe; and gif ye will not consent heirunto I sall nevir ryse out of yis bed. I pray yow tell me yoor resolution. God knawis how I am punischit for making my god of yow, and for having no uther thoucht but on yow; and gif at ony tyme I offend yow, ye are the caus; because quhen ony offenctis me, gif for my refuge I micht plague unto yow, I wold speiks it unto na uther body; but quhen I heir ony thing, not being familiar with yow, neccessitie constrains me to keip it in my briest," &c.

I venture to allege that the two most skilful reporters in the world, sitting side by side, and recording the words as they fell from the lips of the speaker, could not have preserved a more perfect verbal accord. There are the natural differences between the Scotch and English idioms, and those almost imperceptible alterations which a copyist voluntarily or involuntarily makes; but these are all. Not only are the two identical in substance, but the peculiar phraseology and intricate construction of many of the sentences are preserved in both. I am as certain as I can be of anything in this world that the person who wrote in the Casket letter "God knows how I am punished

for making my god of you, and for having no other thought but of you," must have had Crawfurd's words, "God knoweth how I am punished for making my god of you, and for having no other thought but on you," before him at the moment when he was writing. Ask any expert (that is to say, any man of letters), and he will tell you without hesitation that the two documents must have had a common literary origin, must have been coined in the same mint. Now, gentlemen, what does this mean? The Casket Letter was either taken from Crawfurd's deposition, or Crawfurd's deposition was taken from the Casket Letter. But it is certain that Crawfurd's deposition, which is admittedly authentic, in the sense that it was made by him, was never seen by Mary: on the other hand, the persons for whom Crawfurd's deposition was prepared were the persons who subsequently produced the Casket Letters, and they were the only persons who had had access to it. The inference that the Glasgow letter alleged to have been written by the Queen was in point of fact copied from Crawfurd's deposition appears to be irresistible; and if so, then there can be no difficulty in understanding why the forgers did not hesitate to introduce into the letter all the details which the deposition contained. They could afford to be circumstantial with perfect safety.[1]

[1] The deposition of Crawfurd does not appear to have been textually compared with the Glasgow letter before the publication of Mr Burton's History. Mr Burton published considerable extracts from it, being of opinion, apparently, that its verbal resemblance to the Glasgow letter was a voucher for the genuineness of the latter. "They agree," he says, "with overwhelming exactness." I cannot help thinking that Mr Hosack's answer on this point is perfectly conclusive (p. 192 of the original edition of his admirable and elaborate work on *Mary Queen of Scots and her Accusers*). If it is, then the use I have made of the deposition in the text is legitimate and logical. Mr Burton ultimately apprehends the dilemma, and tries to evade it, though the pleas stated by him are not very obviously relevant. Before the document is repudiated, he advises the enthusiast to "weigh the possible influence of that darkly suggestive conversation between Darnley and his domestic, in which they exchange their suspicions about the unexpected visit — suspicions in which murder is an element." Well, we weigh it, and what then? How does "the darkly suggestive conversation" explain the verbal identity of the two documents? After complaining of the Old Bailey style in which the Queen's cause has been advocated, Mr Burton proceeds to say that, to obtain a complete explanation, "we would require to place Craw-

The same observation applies to another argument on which my friend relies—viz., that there are references in the letter to facts and events which, at the time, were only known to Darnley and the Queen.[1] Yes,—and to one other—to Crawfurd, to whom they had been communicated by Darnley. In point of fact, the very allusions on which the argument is maintained appear in the deposition which was in the possession of the parties who were engaged in fabricating the letters.[2]

furd in the witness-box and cross-examine him." But it is Mary's friends who are entitled to complain that Crawfurd was not cross-examined, — the deposition having been obtained by the Queen's enemies, and having been used in evidence against her. It is difficult to see, moreover, how any amount of cross-examination of Crawfurd could have thrown any light upon the question whether the Queen wrote the Glasgow letter, unless, indeed, he had been compelled to admit that he knew, as matter of fact, that that letter was copied from his deposition by the persons who fabricated it.

I may point out that Mr Froude, in one of his most masterly essays, *Criticism and the Gospel History*, argues with, as I think, eminent success, in favour of a proposition such as I maintain. He takes the case of three correspondents from a battle-field, in whose letters there are *a series of passages which agree verbally:* and he asserts that no amount of evidence would serve to convince us that they had *not* seen each other's letters (unless, indeed, each had had before him some common narrative which he had incorporated in his own account.) "The sworn testimony of eyewitnesses who had seen the letters so composed, would add nothing to the weight of a proof which, without their evidence, would be overwhelming; and were the writers themselves, with their closest friends and companions, to swear that there had been no intercommunication, and no story pre-existing of which they had made use, and that each had written *bona fide* from his own original observation, an English jury would sooner believe the whole party perjured than persuade themselves that so extraordinary a coincidence would have occurred."—*Short Studies on Great Subjects*, i. 258.

[1] Burton, iv. 438.

[2] I propose to print in the Appendix (if space can be found), a large portion of the famous Glasgow letter—15 consecutive pages without break or selection—with the object of proving what I have asserted, viz.—that most of it relates to indifferent subjects, and that with the exception of a few passages it does not compromise the Queen. The incriminating passages—those I mean which indicate a guilty purpose—will be printed in italics. I have distinguished them for the purpose of enabling the reader, 1st, to note how comparatively unfrequent they are; and 2d, to judge whether it is correct to argue, as I do, that they have been manifestly interpolated into a narrative with which they have little connection, and to which in tone and feeling they bear no resemblance. Of course if it were established that the letter was a connected composition and addressed to Bothwell, many other passages

Before proceeding to consider the strictly external evidence, I must direct your attention in passing to the extremely curious discussion which has been carried on in regard to the *language* in which the Casket Letters were composed. They were first made public in 1571, appended to the *Detectio Mariæ Reginæ* of Buchanan, which was published in the Latin and Scots languages during that year,—a French translation appearing in 1572. There is no reason to suppose that the Latin version of the Detection was not revised by Buchanan as it went through the press; and there is every reason to believe that the Scots version (published by authority of Cecil) was made by Buchanan himself, as it bears constant traces of his vigorous and sinewy style, and is perhaps the most perfect specimen of the classical Scots which we possess. The French edition, in spite of some transparent mystification, stands substantially in the same position,—it was the fruit of the obscure but sleepless

would raise grave suspicion. If she were not his accomplice, it might then be asked, why send any of those curious familiar details to him? But, as I have said, we have really no means of judging whether separate pages of the Queen's correspondence (or of her diaries or memoranda) written on different occasions and to different persons were not tacked together, and produced at the Conference in the form of a more or less continuous letter to Bothwell: and, what is more, considering the manner in which the letters were then produced (as described by Cecil), we are entitled to say that that strangely hurried examination afforded no security for the detection of a skilful fraud, and that the English lords had no opportunity of deciding whether a "trick" had or had not been played. It is clear that, with the exception of the opening sentences, the whole of the letter down to "And gif I had not ane prufe of his hart of waxe," might have been addressed to the Council or to any lord or lady of her court with whom she maintained confidential relations, or might have been extracted from a diary or memorandum prepared for her own use. One of the most incriminating paragraphs is that which begins: "Excuse—I write evil;" but how can we know that this was not a portion of a letter addressed to Darnley? and, addressed to Darnley, it would have been perfectly innocent and natural. I have in the text adopted the view that the long conversations with Darnley reported in the letter were introduced from Crawfurd's deposition; but the alternative view that Mary actually jotted down these conversations in a Journal or Diary which, falling into the hands of the Lords, afforded them the means not only of producing the actual writing of the Queen, but of framing Crawfurd's deposition, is one that deserves to be attentively considered. But, whichever view is taken, the cardinal fact remains that *one of the documents was copied, word by word, from the other.*

activity of Cecil. Most of the letters were printed in the Scots and French editions,—three only in the Latin. It was supposed for two hundred years that the French versions—thus jointly guaranteed, as it were, by Buchanan and Cecil—were copied verbatim from the French originals, alleged to have been written by the Queen.[1] A very natural conjecture! But two hundred years afterwards a philological contribution to the controversy was made by Goodall, which, for ingenuity and research, deserves to rank alongside the works of the great critics who have exercised their wits on classical antiquity. He proved that the Scots letters were the original, and that the French had been translated from the Scots or from the Latin. This he did mainly by showing that the Scots, so to speak, were idiomatic and proverbial, and that in the French the Scots proverbs and idioms had been slavishly and clumsily reproduced. He showed, moreover, that the grossest blunders had been made by the translators. "I am irket [wearied], and gangand to sleep," said the Scotch writer. The Latin translator, reading "nakit" for "irket," wrote, "Ego nudata sum!" The French translator, exaggerating the blunder, exclaimed, "Je suis toute nue!"—"I am stark naked"—a nice condition in which to write a letter to a lover during a December night! Goodall held that his discovery entitled him to say that, as the French letters which had been produced against Mary had undoubtedly been translated from another language which she could barely understand, he had incontrovertibly demonstrated that she did not write them, and that they must have been fabricated by her accusers. This was so unanswerable, that a change of front on the part of the assailants became necessary. The French versions, which for two hundred years had been regarded as the identical letters which had come from the pen of Mary Stuart, and which had been published as such by Buchanan and Cecil, were courageously repudiated. Admitting that Goodall was right, they replied,—"True, the French versions appended to the *Detectio* are translations from the Scots; but these are not the letters which were produced at Westminster;

[1] Thus John Knox (quoted by Tytler, page 114) says: "In a cabinet, or box, Bothwell had kept the letters of privacy he had from the Quene. *By the taking of this cabinet*, many particulars betwixt the Quene and Bothwell wer clearly discovered. *These letters wer after printed; they wer in French*, with some sonnets of hir own making."

the original letters in French are lost; what we now possess are translations into French made from the Scotch translation." Surely, gentlemen, this is the weakest and clumsiest of explanations. The only motive which could have induced Buchanan and Cecil to retranslate the Scotch translation into French would have been—the loss of the original French. Buchanan, however, was the literary apologist of the Confederate Lords: "To us above all others," are his own words, "it ought to be most grievous who are driven to this strait of necessity, that whose faults we desire to cover, their lives we are forced to accuse, unless we ourselves would be accounted the most wicked persons that live;" and there can be no doubt that they placed all the materials in their possession at his disposal to enable him to compile his apology. Is it conceivable that he was denied access to the original documents by those in whose defence he was engaged? But if Buchanan could not obtain the originals, it is beyond question that Cecil was in possession of the French copies which were left at Westminster.[1] It was once maintained that the "copies" left at Westminster were in Scots; but my learned friend is too candid to defend such a use of the word. Yet we are required to believe that the persons who were most interested in making the evidence against Mary as complete as possible, refused to use the originals which were in their own hands, and preferred to publish a version which was translated from a translation! It is surely far more reasonable to hold that the French versions which we possess are exact facsimiles of the letters produced at Westminster. But then this reasonable view forces us to adopt one or other of two conclusions,—either that the Queen first wrote the letters in Scots and then translated them into French (which is incredible); or, otherwise, that they were written for her—that is to say, *forged* (which is by no means incredible).

But it is to be observed that, while as regards those portions of the letters from which Goodall mainly derived his illustrations, no reply to him is possible, yet there are other portions of certain letters, and, indeed, whole letters, to which his argument does not apply. As regards certain letters or portions of letters it has been demonstrated that the French in which they

[1] See also a paper by Cecil, quoted by Goodall, ii. 377.

are written is idiomatic, and that the Scotch versions have been made from the French.[1] Now, assuming that we have in every instance the letters produced at Westminster, it would appear fair to hold (1) that the genuine French was not written by the person who wrote the spurious French, and (2) that the letters in which genuine French is mixed with spurious French have been, to say the least, tampered with. It is to be observed, moreover, that it is the spurious French, not the genuine French, which contains the passages fatal to the innocence of Mary. How are we to account for these most singular facts? I can see one explanation, and one only. The Confederate Lords resolved to compromise the honour of the Queen. They had obtained some of her own letters, — written, it may be, to Darnley, and taken from his repositories on the night of his murder by Morton and the rest. These were subjected to a process of manipulation, and the interpolated sentences may even yet be detected. But something more was needed,—some stronger avowal, some more unqualified admission, of guilty knowledge and complicity. The Glasgow letters were either wholly or almost wholly fabricated. This is the letter (or letters) from which Goodall has taken his most striking illustrations; and if this letter is withdrawn, the case against the Queen breaks down.[2]

[1] I make this admission; but it must be remembered that the elder Tytler has shown very clearly that the spoken as well as written Scots of the day abounded in Gallicisms, and even in French words;—

"Mr Hume himself, and every other Scotchman, knows well what the vulgar mean by giving a *bonne-allée*, or parting-cup; also, in the same sense, giving one's *foy*.—To give a *bennison*, or blessing, is still a vulgar phrase; and the *beggar's bennison* is universally known in Scotland. Old people still give the name of *montre* to a watch; and a *jardelou*, or *gare de l'eau*, I believe, is pretty well understood in Edinburgh even at this very day."—*Inquiry*, pp. 109, 110.

[2] Mr Burton's reply to the accusation that the letters had been "tampered with," is quite beside the mark. "All questions raised upon this theory are at once settled by the fact that those to whom the letters were first shown, drew conclusions from them as damnatory as any they can now suggest." And in support of this contention, Mr Burton uses the passage from Throgmorton, quoted *infra* (p. 64) and the *précis* of the contents of the letters made by Sir Ralph Sadler. The quotation from Throgmorton does not prove anything regarding the conclusions drawn by those *to* whom they were exhibited, but proves only what was said *by* those who exhibited them. Sir Ralph Sadler's *précis* was not made until *after* the Commissioners had met at York. Of

Now, gentlemen, looked at simply as a philological question, we are entitled to affirm,—(1.) that certain of the letters which we possess were originally composed in French; that some of these have been more or less tampered with, but that they do not, even when tampered with, seriously compromise the Queen: (2.) that certain of the letters which we possess were composed in Scots and translated into French, and that these are the letters which directly incriminate the Queen: (3.) that it is reasonably certain that the French versions of the incriminating letters, which were appended to the *Detectio*, are either transcripts made by Buchanan from the original documents, or transcripts supplied by Cecil from the copies left at Westminster by the Confederate Lords, who swore that the letters then and there produced were the actual letters of the Queen, and written in her own hand: (4.) but, if it is proved that the letters thus authenticated were originally written in Scots, and translated into French, the assertion that they were written by the Queen becomes incredible.

You are aware, gentlemen, that the Confederate Lords first produced the alleged letters of the Queen at York. The letters then produced were written in Scots, and there is reason to believe (as we shall see) that the English Commissioners were given to understand that the letters then produced were the original documents — neither copies nor translations.[1] But,

course "those who had the handling of the letters" (to use Mr Burton's expressive phrase) had completed their work before they were sent to York.

[1] The mere existence of an original Scots version (apart altogether from the question of the possibility of this singularly racy and idiomatic Scots being other than original) is a highly suspicious circumstance. For what necessity was there to translate the French into Scots? To the English Commissioners the letters would have been fully more intelligible in French than Scots. That certain of the French letters—that one, for instance, which was vitiated in translation (*infra*, page 63),—were in existence at the time of the York Conference need not be doubted; but it certainly seems probable that of a large part of the only letter which really impressed the Commissioners (the Glasgow letter), no French version had then been made. *The first time that the letters were seen by any one except the Lords themselves they were in Scots.* I am bound to admit that no complete solution of the mystery has yet been arrived at. My own impression is that, as the secret production would have served their purpose, the Lords never intended that the letters should see the light in any formal investigation; and they were obviously taken aback by Elizabeth's res-

assuming that the Scots were then stated to be translations only, there is abundant evidence to prove that the Scotch translations even of the genuine letters (that is to say, of the letters which were undoubtedly composed in French, and which do not implicate the Queen) had been wilfully vitiated. Here is one notable specimen. In a letter presumably written by Mary to Darnley, she observed, "Comme l'oyseau eschappé de la cage, ou la tourtre qui est sans compagne, ainsi je demureray seule, pour pleurer vostre absence, quelque brève puisse estre." In the Scotch *translation* produced at York the passage stands thus: "*Mak gude watch.* Gif the bird escape out of the cage," &c. The object of the vitiation is obvious. The Queen was criminally eager to prevent Darnley's escape, and she urged Bothwell to "mak gude watch." The fraudulent interpolation served its purpose. The English Commissioners wrote to London to say, that a letter from the Queen to Bothwell had been produced, in which she required him "especially to make good watch that the bird escape not out of the cage."

Long afterwards David Hume pronounced sentence against Mary on the ground, *inter alia*, that she had urged Bothwell to "mak gude watch." Circumstances have enabled us to detect the fraud in this particular case; but what a profound sense of insecurity, as regards the whole of these letters, does such a discovery beget!

So much for the internal and *quasi* internal evidence. It is as conclusive as internal evidence can well be. It entitles us to say that it is *highly improbable* that a refined and cultivated woman like Mary should have written letters so coarse and boorish in language, and so foul in sentiment;—*highly improbable* that Buchanan and Cecil (who undoubtedly had access to them) should have refrained from publishing the documents produced at Westminster and written in the French language, and should have preferred to publish a French version which is certainly taken from the Scotch. But it is impossible to deny that improbable things sometimes happen in this world;

olution and promptitude. When they were once committed, however, to what might prove (though it did not prove) a searching inquiry, the absurdity of producing any letter, or any part of any letter, written in Scots, as a letter written by the Queen, became obvious, and the Scots version (with the famous "Warrant") was sent home—to be afterwards published by Buchanan as an appendix to the *Detectio*.

and if it can be established by external evidence that the letters were *in point of fact* written by Mary, then the internal improbabilities are of no moment, and must be disregarded.

Well, gentlemen, is the external evidence sufficient to overcome the inherent improbability, and to enable us to say that in this case, at least, the improbable did take place? No, gentlemen,—every step in the process by which we endeavour to trace back the letters to the Queen is beset with difficulties of the most insurmountable kind.

The Lords alleged that the incriminating letters were contained in a casket which had been left in the custody of the governor of Edinburgh Castle, Sir James Balfour, by Bothwell. Bothwell sent a servant, George Dalglish, to recover them; and Dalglish, on returning through Edinburgh on June 20, 1567, was captured by the retainers of the Earl of Morton with the casket and letters in his possession. Such was the story told in September 1568, immediately before the Conference at York,—told then, for the first time, by Morton and his associates.[1]

My friend says, that from June 20, 1567, the ruling power in Scotland took its stand upon the import of these documents.[2] He is mistaken: these documents are not alluded to in any writing, even of the most confidential nature, that has been preserved, earlier than the 25th of the following July. It was not till that day that Throgmorton the English envoy was informed that the Confederate Lords "mean to charge her with the murder of her husband, whereof, *they say*, they have as apparent proof against her as may be, as well by the testimony

[1] In his abstract of what he calls the third Glasgow letter, Mr Burton says: "It shows that Bothwell apprehended danger from her profuse writing and her many messages; and she craves forgiveness for disobeying his injunction neither to write nor send" (iv. 430). The question must have often presented itself even to the mind of an unfriendly historian: What tempted Bothwell to preserve these letters? And the difficulty is increased if he believes in the genuineness of this third letter; for it follows that these documents were carefully preserved by the very man who had enjoined his correspondent neither to write nor to send to him for fear of discovery! On the other hand, no letters addressed *to* Mary by Bothwell have been recovered—and yet we may be sure (assuming that the Casket letters were written by her) that every scrap which came from her lover's pen would be kept by her with religious devotion.

[2] Burton, iv. 423.

of her own handwriting, which they have recovered, as also by sufficient witnesses."

The fact is, that so far from taking its stand from June 20, upon letters the import of which was that Mary was the accomplice of Bothwell, the ruling party in Scotland, in a state paper dated July 11 (and in another dated July 21), declared that Bothwell had made a prisoner of the Queen, and "by fear, force, and other extraordinary and more unlawful means, compelled her to become bedfellow to another wife's husband." How did it happen, if it is true that the letters were in their custody on June 20, that a month later the Lords should have "taken their stand" upon a view of the case inconsistent with the "plain purport" of the letters? It is hard to believe that the letters, whether genuine or forged, could have been in their possession prior at least to July 21; and if they were not, the whole story about the letters being taken from Dalglish on June 20 (on which day he was undoubtedly captured) is cut away, and with it the inference or deduction that they had at one time been in Lord Bothwell's possession.

Gentlemen, let me pause here for a moment to contrast the evidence produced by the Confederate Lords to trace the letters into Bothwell's hands—the vital fact of the case—with the evidence which the law demands in the most trivial suit. The Earl of Morton declared on his honour that the letters had been obtained in the manner I have described. That was all. Morton's honour forsooth,—the honour of Mary's most ruthless and unscrupulous enemy! In any court of justice, on the other hand, what amount of evidence would have been required to establish the truth of such a story? Sir James Balfour would have been called to prove that he got the casket from Bothwell, that it was not opened nor tampered with when in his hands, and that he delivered it to Dalglish. Dalglish would have been called to prove that he got a casket from Sir James Balfour, and that it was taken from him by some of Morton's retainers. These retainers would have been examined, as well as the persons in whose presence the casket was opened. Some sort of mark or docket would have been made upon the documents by those present to secure identification, and Morton himself, for many reasons, would have been subjected to a severe cross-examination. Then, subject to observations on the credibility of the witnesses, it would have been legally estab-

lished that the casket with its contents had passed from Bothwell to Morton. But none of these reasonable precautions were taken by men who must have been well acquainted with the rules which have always been observed in courts of justice. Balfour, though in England, was not called. His evidence alone might have been of vast importance. If, for instance, he had been compelled to admit that Lethington had obtained access to the casket, and had removed certain of the documents (such as the "band" for the murder of Darnley entered into by the nobility) which it contained, it would probably have been difficult to convince a jury that the documents subsequently found in it (if any indeed were found) might not have been introduced by Maitland.[1] Dalglish was not called. He had been hastily executed by the Lords before the Conference, and so, happily or unhappily, was safely out of the way. But his deposition was taken, and—strange to say—not a single question was put to him with regard to the casket. If the story was true, here was certainly the most stupendous blunder that men with a grain of common-sense among them could have committed. The Lords *must* have known how momentous such evidence would be. They were noblemen who did nothing rashly. Recalling the precise and technical legal language in which the different "bands" to which they had been parties were drawn, we may say of them, as Charles II. said of certain cautious conspirators of his reign, that "they committed treason by advice of counsel." Is it not self-evident, gentlemen, that these prudent plotters would have carefully preserved some admission of the fact on which so much depended? If the story is true, the absence of any allusion to it in Dalglish's deposition is to me simply unaccountable.

The omission of any allusion in Dalglish's deposition becomes still more suspicious when we consider the account which the Lords first publicly gave with regard to the *time* at which the letters were discovered. In the Act of Council of December 4, 1567, issued by the Confederate Lords, it is implied, if not expressly asserted, that the cause of their taking up arms against the Queen in the beginning of June was the discovery "by divers her privie letters, written and subscrivit with her ain hand," that she was Bothwell's accomplice. This statement

[1] There is really some evidence to this effect.

is of course directly at variance with the assertion on which they ultimately took their stand—viz., that the letters were not obtained till the 20th of June, by which time the Queen had been made prisoner and sent to Lochleven.

I think, therefore, that I am entitled to maintain that the Confederate Lords failed to prove that the documents which they produced had been in Bothwell's possession. It can be shown, on the other hand, that the description of the alleged letters given by the Queen's enemies previous to their production at Westminster was neither uniform nor consistent. In the first place, an abstract or summary of the Glasgow letter was sent to Murray (who was then in London) about the end of July 1567. According to this account, the letter stated that the writer proposed *to go and fetch* her husband; to administer poison to him at a house on the road; if the attempt to poison did not succeed, to have him blown up *on the night of the marriage of one of her servants;* and it concluded by entreating her lover either to poison or to divorce his wife! It is all very well to say that this rough draft (as I may call it) is in a general way an accurate *précis* of the Glasgow letter; but even my friend, when he comes to compare them, must admit that it is far stronger and more circumstantial than that ultimately produced.[1] Murray adds, that he had been informed that the letter was "written in her own hand, and signed with her name."[2] In the Act of Council to which I have alluded (4th December 1567) it is alleged that the letters were "written and subscrivit (signed) with her own hand, and sent by her to James, Earl Bothwell." But in the Act of Parliament which was passed a few days later, the letters are simply described as being "hailly written with her

[1] I would have been disposed to say, looking at the documents with a critical eye, that they are as unlike each other as could well be imagined. The abstract sent to Murray is, moreover, open to the observation that it is impossible to believe that such an accurate and circumstantial *anticipation* of the actual course of events (*e.g.*, Darnley to be blown up *on the night of the marriage* of one of the Queen's servants) was or could have been written weeks *before* their occurrence.

[2] It has not been noticed, I think, that this letter from Murray conclusively disposes of Hume's ingenious argument that the word "subscrivit" in the Act of Council, applied, not to the letters, but to the contracts of marriage. Murray says that he had been distinctly informed that the fatal letter was "signed with her name."

awin hand."[1] They are no longer alleged to be signed, and in point of fact the letters produced were neither signed nor addressed.[2]

"Not signed!" and yet from July to December the parties using the letters pretended that they bore Mary's signature. Any person accidentally lighting upon such documents would naturally in the first instance turn to the signature; and it is clear from the careful manner in which the description of the signature is introduced, both in Murray's letter and in the Act of Council, that the Lords fully understood the importance that would be attached to it. I cannot undertake to explain why the letters ultimately produced by them were not signed. They may have felt instinctively that no woman in her senses would be likely to attach her name to such monstrous confessions. It is more probable, however, that they did not venture to forge Mary's name, seeing that her manner of signing (all sorts of official letters and deeds bearing of course her signature only) must have been familiar to a great number of persons who were not acquainted with her manner of writing.

"Not addressed!" This also is a most important omission. Assuming that the letters were written by Mary, we can only *infer* from their contents that they were addressed to Bothwell. But the omission is important in another light. Select the most innocent letter in the world (say from a wife to her husband), and falsely affirm that it was addressed to a different person, and it becomes charged with criminality. The intelligible allusions are invested with a guilty meaning—those which are barely intelligible are twisted into vile significance—un-

[1] Some of the Queen's friends were members of this Parliament, and a good deal has been made of the fact that they did not protest against the terms of the Act. But the failure to do so was satisfactorily explained in the protest of the Convention held at Dumbarton, September 1568.

[2] A writer in the *Gentleman's Magazine* (1760—Dr Johnson?) has this acute remark: "The difference between 'written and subscribed,' and 'wholly written,' gives just reason to suspect first, a *forgery*, and then *a variation of the forgery*. It is, indeed, very remarkable that the first account asserts *more* than the second, though the second contains *all* the truth: for the letters, whether written by the Queen or not, were not subscribed by her. And had the second account differed from the first only by something added, the first might have contained truth, though not all the truth: but as the second corrects the first by diminution, the first cannot be free from fraud."

utterable sin is cloaked in those which are entirely incomprehensible. The Lords had no doubt plenty of Mary's letters to Darnley and others to pick and choose among, and by simply asserting that they were addressed to Bothwell, the language of wifely regard was converted into the language of criminal familiarity.

Before leaving this point it is important to notice that a piece of evidence was produced by the Lords which seems to exclude the possibility of the Glasgow letters (again assuming that they were written by Mary) having been *received* by Bothwell. Mary on her way to Glasgow parted on January 23d from Bothwell, who returned to Edinburgh. The 23d was a Wednesday, and the Queen reached Glasgow next day. The Glasgow letters (three in one view, two in another) must have been written on Friday and Saturday. Paris says that he and Beaton took them to Edinburgh, where they were delivered to Bothwell. But, according to Murray's Journal, which was produced at Westminster, Bothwell went to Liddesdale on the 24th, and did not return to Edinburgh till the 28th, on which day the Queen also returned. If Murray's Journal is to be relied on, it is simply impossible that the letters could have reached Bothwell at Edinburgh. It is obvious besides that Mary, if she sent the letters, must have believed that Bothwell was in Edinburgh. Now he went to Liddesdale the day after he parted from her, and it is difficult to understand (especially if they were so intimate as to be engaged in planning a murder which was to be speedily accomplished) why he should have left her in ignorance of his movements. The fair presumption certainly is, that she knew where he was, and this presumption is not consistent with the assertion that she wrote to him at Edinburgh. But, whether she wrote or did not write, the letters, it is plain, could not have been received by him *there* during her absence, as Paris falsely asserted.[1]

To proceed.

[1] There is another curious circumstance. In June 1568, Lennox, who was in England, wrote to Crawfurd, who was in Glasgow, "by all possible methods to search for more matters against her," and, *inter alia*, to ascertain "if she used to send any messages to Edinburgh, and by whom"—while she was with Darnley in Glasgow. Crawfurd's deposition was the result of this commission. But there is not a word

When Mary reached England after the disastrous battle of Langside, Elizabeth proposed that the matters in dispute between her and her subjects should be referred to a Commission. Mary at once, and Murray after considerable hesitation, agreed to the reference. Mary's instructions to her Commissioners contained the following article: "In case they allege they have any writings of mine which may infer presumptions against me, ye shall desire that the principals be produced, *and that I myself may have inspection thereof and make answer thereto;* for ye shall affirm in my name I never wrote anything concerning that matter to any creature: and if any such writings there be, they are false and feigned, forged and invented by themselves to my dishonour and slander; and there are persons in Scotland, both men and women, who can counterfeit my handwriting, and write the like manner of writing which I use as well as myself, and principally such as are in company with themselves." The Commissioners—the Duke of Norfolk, the Earl of Sussex, and Sir Ralph Sadler—met at York in the beginning of October; and, on the 21st, were secretly, and in the absence of Mary's representatives, waited upon at their lodgings by the representatives of the Confederate Lords. The Casket Letters were then exhibited for the first time "in private and secret conference." The letters were in the Scotch language, and, as already observed, it is tolerably clear that the Scotch Commissioners represented that the letters then and there produced were in the handwriting of Mary. "And these men here do constantly affirm the said letters and other writings *which they produce of her own hand, to be her own hand indeed.*" But however this might be, the Commissioners cautiously avoided expressing any decided opinion upon the authenticity of the letters. "In a paper here enclosed," they proceed, "we have noted to your Majesty the chief and special points of the said letters,[1] *written, as they say, with her own*

in it about any letter having been despatched by the Queen while she remained in Glasgow. If two of the domestics in attendance upon Mary (she appears to have had only a small retinue) had been sent to Edinburgh or elsewhere during that brief visit, is it conceivable that Crawfurd could have been kept in ignorance of the fact?

[1] The extracts then made and transmitted to London are written in Scots, and identical, word for word, with the corresponding passages in the letters as afterwards printed in Scots.

hand, to the intent it may please your Majesty to consider of them, and so to judge whether the same be sufficient to convince her of the detestable crime of the murder of her husband, which, in our opinions and consciences, *if the said letters be written with her own hand*, is very hard to be avoided." "If the said letters be written with her own hand," then of course there could be no doubt whatever of her guilt. The Earl of Sussex, after examining the letters, addressed a confidential letter to Cecil, in which the tone of doubt apparent in the official letter is strongly emphasised. The Lords will not venture, he says, to accuse the Queen of murder by producing her letters, as in that event "she will deny them, and accuse the most of them of manifest consent to the murder, *hardly to be denied*, so as upon the trial on both sides her proofs will judicially fall best out, *as it is thought*." "And now touching my opinion of the matter," he continues, "I think surely no end can be made good for England except the person of the Scotch Queen be detained by one means or other in England." To accomplish this object the Queen must be proved guilty of the murder. But "if this will not fall out sufficiently (*as I doubt it will not*) to determine judicially, if she denies her letters," another course which he points out, and to which I will advert immediately, would require to be adopted. The sagacious and experienced Sussex, it is clear, had formed an extremely unfavourable opinion of the value of the documents which the Lords had produced at York.

The Conference adjourned to Westminster (where the whole of the Council were added to the Commission), and in the absence of Mary's Commissioners certain of the documents were again produced—this time in French. The Lords manifested the utmost reluctance to lay them before the Council; but Cecil, by a clever move, succeeded in forcing their hand. Copies were taken, and these copies were left with the Council; "which writings," says the minute, "being copied, *were read in French*, and a due collation made thereof as near as could be by reading and inspection, and made to accord with the originals which the said Earl Murray required to be redelivered." No examination of the letters (with the view of testing their genuineness) was made at Westminster: all that was done was to collate the copies with the originals, which were immediately returned to the Lords. When the letters had

been duly copied and collationed, the Council, along with six of the great nobles, were summoned to meet at Hampton Court. The results of the Conference were laid before them. The casket was again produced. Then, but not till then, the letters were compared with genuine letters addressed to Elizabeth. Why this vitally important examination should have been delayed till the last moment, and why, when it did take place, it should have been hastily slurred over, are facts which have not been explained. No expert was called in, and the examination was of the most suspiciously cursory and unscientific kind. "It is to be noted," Cecil frankly admits, "that at the time of the producing, showing, and reading of all these foresaid writings, *there was no special choice nor regard had to the order of the producing thereof:* but the whole writings lying altogether upon the council table, the same were one after another showed rather by hap, as the same did lie upon the table, than with any choice made, as by the natures thereof, *if time had so served*, might have been."

It is known that great pressure was brought to bear upon the assembled Peers to induce them to return a verdict unfavourable to Mary; but the utmost that could be extracted from them was a prudent recommendation that Elizabeth should not admit Mary to an audience, "*as the case now did stand*"—that is to say, upon the *ex parte* evidence which had been secretly laid before the Council by Mary's enemies in her absence. On hearing of what had taken place, Mary at once demanded that she should have access to the pretended letters; but after a good deal of fencing this was finally denied to her, and the Lords were hurriedly sent back to Scotland with the letters, being informed by Elizabeth before they left that "there had been nothing sufficiently produced nor shown by them against the Queen their sovereign, whereby the Queen of England should conceive or take any evil opinion of the Queen her good sister for anything yet seen."

Such is a plain narrative of the proceedings and results of this famous Conference. One or two general observations must be added.

My friend asserts that Mary, throughout the Conference, manifested suspicious eagerness to prevent the production of the letters. The charge is so serious that it merits particular reply.

The private Conference to which Elizabeth proposed and Mary

agreed that her cause should be referred, was purely political in its constitution and objects. Mary was to table a charge *pro forma* against her insurgent subjects, and they were to defend themselves on public grounds. The Conference was intended to be the instrument by which an arrangement between Mary and the Lords should be carried through. But from the first Mary declined to allow any matter affecting her own honour to be introduced.[1] If such matters were introduced, her Commissioners were instructed to protest and withdraw from the Conference. Elizabeth implicitly or explicitly was a party to this agreement. The bond was broken by the Earl of Murray. He went secretly to the English Commissioners at York, and showed them the Casket Letters.[2] Mary's Commissioners were not permitted to be present—did not know, indeed, for some days that such a breach of faith had been committed. But the moment that Mary heard of the plot, she took up a position from which she never wavered. Her own Commissioners were scarcely so sagacious; for Leslie was at bottom a shifty, voluble, elastic kind of creature, whose faith in human virtue of any kind was small, and who wished above all things to save his mistress from the indignity of a public trial. But Mary herself always said, "I consent to this private Conference with a view to an amicable adjustment of the difficulties between my subjects and myself. If, however, you bring against me any charge affecting my honour, accommodation is impossible. Thenceforth it must be war to the knife. And to no secret conclave can I consent to refer such an accusation. I must be heard in public before the Queen, the assem-

[1] Thus on 12th October 1568, Norfolk writes from York:—"They," the Confederate Lords, "play at no small game; they stand for their lives, lands, and goods; and they are not ignorant if they would, for it is every day told them that *as long as they abstain from touching the Queen's honour*, she will make with them what reasonable end they can desire."

[2] The Commissioners write from York on 11th October, that the Earl of Murray "hath been content to show us such matter as they have to condemn the Queen of Scots of the murder of her husband. . . . And so they sent unto us the Lord of Lethington, Mr George Buchanan, and another being a Lord of the Session, *who in private and secret conference with us, not as Commissioners, as they protested, but for our better instruction*," proceeded to exhibit the "matter" in question,—the famous "warrant" "bearing date the 19th of April, signed with the Queen's hand," being the first produced.

bled Peers of England, and the Ambassadors of Christendom. I will not trust such a question to the decision of any meaner tribunal. But I solemnly declare to the world that the accusation is false, and that the pretended letters are not mine, but have been fabricated by my accusers. Let them be produced, and let me be furnished with copies. I pledge my word of honour to prove that they have been forged—no such letters having ever been written by me." But her request was disregarded. No—a public inquiry would not be granted. The letters were produced in her absence. Then she said, "Show me the letters—give me copies—I will undertake, even before a tribunal which has disregarded the plainest rules of justice and fair dealing, to manifest that they are malicious inventions." But again—No. The letters were always withheld from her (even though she got the French Ambassador at last to take the matter up urgently), and she was never allowed an opportunity to expose the deception.

My friend says that she did not mean seriously to defend herself. She would go before the assembled Peers and on her honour as a sovereign Princess declare that the accusations were false. She desired only a great stage on which to display her histrionic powers.

But he forgets that the moment she heard of the charges she set herself to obtain the evidence that was available. She got Huntley and Argyle to declare in writing what they knew; and had it not been for the "protestation" thus obtained, we should never have learned some of the most important facts of the case as telling against her accusers. Why, gentlemen, this single document changed in one moment the whole aspect of the controversy. It was thenceforth impossible to maintain that the Scotch Protestant nobles were not privy to the murder of Darnley. How much more might have been obtained had an honest investigation been undertaken? He forgets, besides, that rather than have the inquiry stifled, she ultimately consented to allow the case to proceed before the same secret tribunal. But her appeal was rejected. Elizabeth would neither hear her defence, nor would she permit her to see the letters. The Council, when hard pressed, declared that no case against Mary had been substantiated, and despatched Murray and his famous casket across the Border—with £5000 in his pocket to pay his expenses.

Mary's conduct during the Conference thus appears to have been perfectly simple and straightforward, whereas Elizabeth's was marked by extreme duplicity, there being abundant evidence to show that the investigation was conducted dishonestly. The Queen and her Council did not, as a rule, stick at trifles. The Earl of Lennox opportunely appeared at Westminster as one of Mary's importunate accusers: years afterwards Lady Lennox admitted that her husband had been induced to appear by the urgency of the English Council! It is possible that at first Elizabeth, terrified by what she regarded as a dangerous democratic outbreak, was willing to befriend the sister Queen whom rebellious subjects had deposed. But even at York the Conference had assumed a complexion decidedly hostile to Mary. The remarkable letter from Sussex to Cecil throws a clear light upon the spirit in which the inquiry was thereafter conducted. "The object of the Council should be to retain Mary as a prisoner in England, and this could be effected only by rendering the breach between her and the Lords irreparable. If they could be induced to assail her honour, it was highly improbable that any truce, however hollow, could thenceforth be patched up between them. The pretended letters could not, indeed, be safely subjected to public investigation and hostile criticism, but they might be privately produced and their tenor would be noised abroad. The mere rumour that such letters had been produced would cast a slur upon Mary's reputation, and lessen her influence in England, where she was growing dangerously powerful." Such was the substance of this remarkable communication; and whoever examines the subsequent proceedings of the Conference — the anxiety of the English Council to obtain the letters, and their steady persistent resolution to prevent Mary and her friends from examining them—will find that the advice was acted upon to the letter.

The Council, as we have seen, did not venture to condemn the Queen, nor to declare that the letters were genuine; but even if such a declaration had been made, what would it have been worth? There are certain plain rules regarding the admission of evidence which are invariably observed in courts of justice. That reasonable precautions shall be taken to prevent documents from being tampered with; that in the event of challenge they shall be legally and competently authenticated; that there shall be no break in the chain which connects them

with the accused; that the accused shall be duly informed of their nature, and that he or his advisers shall have free access to them,—it has been found that the observance of some such rules as these is essential to the exclusion of false testimony, and to the righteous administration of justice. To call the perfunctory and unscientific investigation made by an assembly notoriously hostile to the Queen, *a fair trial*, in this sense, or indeed in any sense, would be a mockery and an impertinence.

This, gentlemen, is the external evidence which has been produced to authenticate the Casket Letters. It required, as you will recollect, to be ample, conclusive, overwhelming. Nothing short of absolute demonstration would suffice to convince any one acquainted with her other writings that these monstrous letters—so awkward, so uncouth, so patched and blotted—came from the practised and persuasive pen of Mary Stuart! My learned friend contends that the external evidence is sufficient. I maintain that it is ridiculously and absurdly inadequate. It is for you, gentlemen, to judge between us.

Now, gentlemen, we are at last in a position to estimate the weight of the final argument on which my friend relied,—viz., the impossibility that any trick should have been practised which should not have been seen through by Cecil, Walsingham, Knox, the French Court, the Spanish Court, the whole of Europe; and the further impossibility that men in Cecil and Walsingham's position would have sanctioned such a trick, or that Catholic Europe would not have protested against it.

"It may be easy for my learned brother," to use my friend's own words, "to suppose men like Burghley or Walsingham or John Knox to have been accomplices in a forgery—it is to me impossible. He can account to himself for the acquiescence of the Catholic world, French, Spaniards, Pope, and the rest, in the defamation of Mary Stuart. Knowing as I do that she was the very hinge on which the future of the Catholic Church revolved, that all their hopes were wrapped up in her, and that to have proved her innocent if they could, or even to have asserted her innocence before Europe, and defied Elizabeth to prove her guilty, would have been a matter of perfectly transcendent importance to them, their utter silence about it for ten years is to me utterly inexplicable on any hypothesis but one. He speaks of Lethington as a person who might have forged

the letters; and doubtless if the letters were forged, Lethington knew by whom it was done. Now consider Lethington's later life. He devoted himself soul and body to Mary Stuart's interest. He married one of her Marys. He was the person whom evidently she trusted more completely than any one else in Scotland. Can my friend seriously suppose that she would have thrown herself on the support of the man whom she knew to have forged her handwriting to prove her a murderer, and thus to have been the cause of all her misery? Can he seriously suppose that Maitland would have allowed a secret to die with him which, if told, would have overwhelmed the enemies of the cause to which he had devoted himself, with instant infamy? I do not hesitate to say that if any definite proof could have been produced that the letters were forgeries, Elizabeth's throne would not have been worth a month's purchase." These considerations, weighty in themselves, are put to you with a force of expression which shows how entirely they have recommended themselves to the mind of my learned friend. But are they so irresistible, after all?

Cecil and Walsingham, we may admit, were great and sagacious if not stainless politicians, and could, no doubt, have seen through the "trick" if they had chosen. But did they choose? On the contrary, is it not abundantly clear, from the equivocal attitude assumed by the English Government during the Conference, that they did *not* choose? Then my learned friend cannot understand how, on the assumption that Lethington was a party to the fraud, he could have subsequently regained the confidence of his mistress. Of course, if Mary had known as matter of fact that Lethington had contrived the trick, it would have been difficult, if not impossible, to forgive him: but there being no positive evidence on the subject in her possession, it was highly convenient that the most gifted man in Scotland should be permitted to return to her service. Then my friend's further contention that Lethington, if he had contrived the forgery, would have cleared Mary's character by a voluntary confession, does not seem to me to be admissible. If he was the criminal, we could hardly expect him to accuse himself! That would have been an act of really heroic self-sacrifice, and Lethington was not a hero in any high sense. Such a confession, moreover, would have been not only embarrassing but suicidal—it would have raised an eternal barrier between him-

self and the Queen. There can be no doubt, however, that, in another point of view, Lethington's attitude towards Mary during the last years of his life, is a fact of the utmost significance. If he knew that Mary had been the innocent victim of a foul fraud, it is perfectly conceivable that he should have devoted himself, with all the energy of repentance, to repair the fortunes of the woman whose life he had helped to wreck. If, on the other hand, he had believed that the letters were genuine, if he had believed, in short, that she was a murderess and adulteress, how could he have thrown himself with such ardour and devotion into her service? And this is an observation which does not apply to Lethington alone, and which induces me to assert with some confidence that the effect of the publication of the letters has been immensely exaggerated. The letters did not alienate Mary's friends either in Scotland or England. The great nobles to whom they were exhibited did not cease to support her. Many of them, like Lethington, sooner or later, laid down their lives for her. It appears, therefore, to be a fair inference, that even when they originally appeared, the letters were not believed to be authentic by those behind the scenes. Cecil was extremely anxious that they should be circulated, and surreptitiously encouraged their publication; but the verdict of the Council had been in favour of Mary; and the surreptitious publication, though it may have inflamed the popular Protestant sentiment, did not influence the settled convictions of Catholic Europe. Long before Mary's tragical death, the Casket Letters had virtually passed out of remembrance,—even the powerful rhetoric of the *Detectio* having failed to give them vitality as a permanent political force.

So much for the evidence; and now to conclude. My friend affirms that the sequence of circumstance alone is sufficient to convict the Queen. When Rizzio was assassinated by Darnley, she threatened that she would give him a sore heart: within a year Darnley was murdered; within six months she married the man who had managed the murder. But, gentlemen, it is precisely in such circumstances that we are bound to hesitate and to pause. There is nothing more tragic in human experience than the spectacle of innocence, drawn blindly into the net, unable to break the meshes which perverse destiny has woven; and these fatalities of evil fortune have formed the subject-matter of some of the greatest dramas ever written.

Sunt lacrimæ rerum. The net in which the victim is enclosed, is mostly knitted by that mocking and spiteful power which disturbs the orderly government of the world; but it is sometimes knitted by the hand of man, and then—then only—do the successive acts of the tragedy become suspiciously consecutive, coherent, and consistent. Then only is there no break in the chain; then only can the evidence against the accused be faithfully characterised, in my learned friend's words, as "absolutely overwhelming."

Gentlemen, whether the woman who was called Mary Stuart, and who lived three centuries ago, was ruinously in love with that ill-starred soldier of fortune James Hepburn, is a question that cannot now be conclusively determined. I do not believe that she was; but the arguments on either side may be indefinitely prolonged.

> "How many ages hence
> Shall this our lofty scene be acted over
> In states unborn and accents yet unknown?"

Yet after all is said that can be said, Mary Stuart's story is in its main elements a simple one. Placed by an unhappy chance in the very centre of the tremendous forces which were fashioning a new world, she became the victim of their violence. She was driven on by an imperious necessity to the doom which met her at Fotheringay.——But the stress of the conflict is over; and we may now render that justice to the Queen which she could not expect from her contemporaries. And—from whatever point of view we regard it—the picture of this woman, struggling vainly against impending fate, yet bearing herself bravely in her darkest hour, in her sorest need, and to the bitter end, is one of the immortal masterpieces of history. She was worsted, indeed, as was inevitable; she failed disastrously, as she was bound to fail: yet even in her own age there were men who felt that a smile from Mary on her scaffold was worth all the ribbons and garters that the prosperous Elizabeth could bestow: and posterity has approved their choice.

WILLIAM THE SILENT.

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WILLIAM OF ORANGE was the martyr of Non-conformity, as Mary Stuart was the martyr of Catholicism. The struggle between the two forces is yet undecided; and, at the present moment, in spite of the arrogant confidence of liberalism and science, it is difficult to forecast any decisive issue.

The Catholic Church, it must be kept constantly in mind, has many attractions. Besides material and spiritual attractions, besides gorgeous ceremonial and a visible basis of authority, she has recently offered us, in Dr Newman's writings, what assumes to be the strongest intellectual food. Never was a Protestant theology—a theology constructed on the basis of Christian experience and the human conscience—more urgently needed. Such a volume will be the Institute of the age, and it will be a volume from which the mere arbitrary traditions—"the beggarly elements"—of Protestantism will be excluded. *The Grammar of Assent*—to me by reason of the logical splendour and intellectual havoc it discloses, one of the most interesting and distressing of books,—has been completed and given to a perplexed and bewildered world;

we wait now for the scientific and rational Protestant manifesto—*The Grammar of Dissent.* Lord St Aldegonde could not see the use of bishops; but a bishop who could rise to the height of the great argument which justifies Luther, and Melanchthon, and Calvin, and John Knox, and Burleigh, and Walsingham, would be worth his salt. For it cannot be too often repeated that the Protestant apologists who deny the validity of consciousness and the veracity of conscience, cut the ground from beneath their feet. Protestantism is the religion of reasonableness as opposed to the religion of authority; and the Protestant who puts an infallible book in the place of an infallible church, is disloyal to the principles of the Reformation, if not to the practice of the Reformers.

Meantime, in the career of William of Orange, most of the leading principles which this Grammar must vindicate are set out with a simple persuasiveness, beside which the most artful rhetoric, the most masterful logic, are comparatively feeble.

When, in 1556, Charles V. laid aside his crown, Europe was still throbbing with the pangs of the Reformation. That momentous spiritual revolt was only half accomplished, and the combatants, with their hands resting on their half-sheathed swords, awaited the signal which was to renew the strife. France was divided; Germany was divided; in England, while Henry had declared that the Pope had no power or authority within his realm, Mary continued to burn the heretics who denied the supremacy of Rome. But the south of Europe was still loyal to the Papacy. The fervid Italian and Spanish blood had not been warmed by "the fire of Almighty God." The new King of Castile and Arragon buckled on his armour, and proclaimed himself the champion of the Catholic faith.[1]

[1] In Mr Motley's History of *The Rise of the Dutch Republic*, a great theme is treated with remarkable pictorial power, and truly dramatic insight. The revolt of the Netherlands is indeed a stirring drama, of

By a fatal mischance, to the malignant bigot who now occupied the throne that Charles had renounced, the richest cities and fairest provinces of northern Europe belonged. A hardy race had taken possession of the shifting sandbanks and treacherous morasses—fit only, as it seemed, for the wild duck or the plover—which skirt the continent where the Meuse, the Scheldt, and the Rhine, mingle with the salt waters of the German Ocean, and had converted them into flowering meadows and fruitful pastures. Upon a half-submerged corner of Europe, lying below the level of the sea, subject to constant inundation, and protected from complete destruction only by the unsleeping energy and vigilance of its people, a great merchant commonwealth had arisen, which outrivalled and outlived the maritime republics of Italy. Amid these lagoons and shallows, the traffic of the world in the sixteenth century was conducted. The fisheries of Holland were the most prolific then known; the cattle fattened on the plains of Flanders were the best in Europe. There were two hundred and eight walled cities within the provinces, and every city swarmed like a beehive. Antwerp had become what Venice had ceased to be—the commercial capital of Christendom—and every day in the year five hundred vessels entered and quitted its famous port. An army of one hundred thousand mechanics abode in Ghent. For many years Dort had been the exclusive market-place for English wool; and the merchandise of the Mediterranean, and the drugs and spices of the East, were stored in the warehouses of Bruges. The people who dwelt in these cities were wealthy, industrious, and ingenious. They loved liberty with vehement devotion, and their municipal institutions, the local laws and usages which they jealously, and often truculently, vindicated, had preserved a measure of practical freedom to these prosperous republics, of which the most accomplished tyranny never entirely deprived them. The ordinary amusements of the people were characteristic of a lively and ingenious race. Smiths and weavers represented the scenes of Scripture, or the allegories of poetry; smiths and weavers organised those "Guilds of Rhetoric," which, sometimes as the

which Orange is the hero. Than that of "Father William"—the sagacious soldier, the far-seeing statesman, the pure patriot, the tolerant reformer—history has in charge few brighter or better-beloved names; and Mr Motley has approved himself a most competent and genial biographer.

popular moralist, sometimes as the popular satirist, the John Bunyan or *Charivari* of the age, exerted no inconsiderable influence upon the contemporary politics. No thoughtful man can contemplate the great festivals, the "land-jewels" of these guilds, and compare them with the amusements now popular, without feeling that society, during the three centuries that have elapsed since Charles retired to his monastery, has not got very far in advance of the Netherland artisans. Nor was this all. The noblest trophies of art and science were sown broadcast across these sand-swept and weather-beaten flats. A quaint, fantastic, and eminently original school of architecture had covered the land with spacious churches and richly adorned public buildings; had stretched in mid-air the gossamer network of the Antwerp spire, and lined the canals of Ghent and Bruges with dwellings for fat burghers, which rivalled the palaces of the Venetian nobility. Many eminent painters, moreover, had even then appeared, the founders of the school which gave birth to Peter Paul Rubens, and Anthony Van Dyck. Everywhere throughout the land there was *life*, everywhere the evidence of hardy strength and splendid refinement, everywhere the monuments of a cheerful, bustling, quick-witted, and ingenious people. "An unlovely land," which, even in these days of vulgar prosperity, could not have been without its charm; but which, after passing hero-like through the agony and bloody sweat of its Gethsemane, was to become for ever one of the "holy places" of freedom.

The marriage of "the Lady Mary" with Maximilian of Austria had transferred the Netherlands from the house of Burgundy to the house of Hapsburg, and by the marriage of her son with the heiress of Castile and Arragon, two countries far asunder, alike in geographical position and national idiosyncrasy, were united under a single sceptre. That sceptre was now held by a man who was at heart a Spaniard, and who hated his gay, shrewd, and turbulent subjects in the provinces. He had, moreover, dedicated his life to a single object—an object which could only be reached by wading through their blood.

The character of Philip dismays the historian. It is one of those which it is almost impossible to explain. He was a fanatic and a voluptuary—a man whose virtues were more detestable than his vices. His dull ferocity is without parallel in history. Even the bloodthirstiness of Alva could not rival

his master's. He was cured of an ailment from which he suffered on learning of the butcheries which followed the fall of Haarlem; he wrote with indignant bitterness against the "clemency" of an edict which enacted that his Protestant subjects should be, not "burned," but simply "*hanged.*" There have been men whom a vehement temper, a fine indignation, the *hysterica passio* of Lear, have hurried into unmeditated cruelty. No such extenuation can be offered for Philip. His heart was icy, his temperament sluggish, his feelings frigid. He was never impelled by strong emotion, nor overwhelming passion. He slew his subjects as a butcher slays sheep; it was a methodical, commonplace, utterly unromantic business. Even his fanaticism was not constant; the plea of sincerity cannot be advanced in his behalf. To extirpate heresy was the work of his life; he would not relent, he said, "though the sky should fall on his head;" but for the imperial crown he consented to undo that work. He undertook, if elected Emperor, to withdraw the Spaniards from the Netherlands, to tolerate Protestantism, and to restore the Prince of Orange to his possessions. The sullen and merciless tyrant was content to be *bribed* into humanity.

To extirpate heresy was, as we say, Philip's mission. Early in his reign he had concerted with the French king a "Sicilian Vespers" for the Huguenot leaders throughout their dominions. Henry's death, and the conveniences of political intrigue, did not allow the design to be carried out at that time in France, and the dismal festivities of "the Paris wedding" were postponed for a dozen years. But Philip was true to his troth, and the fertile and populous Netherland was the field which he selected. There, in fire and blood, he approved his inveterate devotion to the Church of Christ.

How, in what manner, he did his work is branded in black letters on the page of history. "The Netherland inquisition," he complacently confessed, "is more implacable than the Spanish;" and in his industrious hands it more than justified its bitter renown. One hundred thousand Netherland heretics were murdered—not coarsely nor vulgarly, but with the last refinements, the most delicate subtleties of torture—by this great religious organisation. Rigorous edicts were promulgated, which punished the unspoken thought as well as the visible act. Men and women were strangled, beheaded, and burned

alive in hundreds, because they had murmured against the rapacity of the priests, or could repeat a paraphrase by Clement Marot. It was estimated that by 1565 more than fifty thousand persons suspected of heresy had been put to death. Thirty thousand skilled artisans had emigrated to England before the Duke of Alva was despatched from Spain; and on the news of his coming a perfect panic seized the populace, and the highways were blocked by the throngs that fled from Philip's terrible lieutenant. Alva did his master's work in his master's spirit. Under his government these fair and fruitful places became a charnel-house. The hands of the executioner were never idle. The best blood of the land stained the scaffold. Whole districts were depopulated. Horrible barbarities were committed in every village. Many of the wealthiest cities were abandoned for days to the outrages of a licentious and vindictive soldiery. "A wail of agony," wrote Count Nieuwenar, "was heard above Zutphen last Sunday, a sound as of a mighty massacre." "Antwerp" (exclaims Orange, shortly after that Spanish Fury "whereof the memory shall be abominable so long as the world stands")—"Antwerp, once the powerful and blooming, now the most forlorn and desolate city of Christendom!" And at length a sentence of the Holy Office was published which condemned all the inhabitants of the provinces to death as heretics,—surely "the most concise death-warrant" ever pronounced upon a people! Women violated, men shot down like dogs, great cities reduced to ashes, the most splendid civilisation in Europe blackened and defaced,—thus did the Most Catholic King manifest his horrible constancy to the service of his Redeemer.[1]

The historian can regard such blind and brutal folly only with indignation, astonishment, and horror. The Lady Alice,

[1] The intensity of hatred which the cruelties practised by Alva excited, is strikingly illustrated by a satirical poem of the time, entitled *The Ghent Paternoster*. It is addressed to the Duke.

THE GHENT PATERNOSTER.

Our devil who dost in Brussels dwell,
Curst be thy name in earth and hell:
Thy kingdom speedily pass away,
Which hath blasted and blighted us many a day;
Thy will nevermore be done,
In heaven above, nor under the sun;
Thou takest daily our daily bread;
Our wives and children lie starving or dead.

in the poem, longs to have for one hour her lover's murderer within her hands:

> Ah! just to go about with many knights
> Wherever you went, and somehow on one day,
> In a thick wood, to catch you off your guard,
> Let you find, you and your some fifty friends,
> Nothing but arrows wheresoe'er you turned,
> Yea, and red crosses, great spears over them;
> And so between a lane of my true men
> To walk up pale, and stern, and tall, and then,
> And then to make you kneel, O Knight Guesclin;
> *And then*——

Could the historian for one moment so meet with Philip—the bigot, the tyrant, the assassin—something might be done to appease the fierce craving for justice which the terrible tale provokes. But his most scathing words are impotent—ah, so impotent! He feels that to inflict punishment on this monster the language of mortal vengeance does not serve. He takes refuge in polished scorn; the white lips curl with bitter courtesy; nay, better still, he leaves the issue in stern silence to Him who judgeth righteously. For nowhere can that issue be adjusted now, unless "at the judgment-seat above."

Such was the man and the age that William of Orange had to deal with. A Netherlander, he had to deliver the Netherlands from Philip, and to restore political and religious freedom to his countrymen. That was the problem which was forced upon him, which he had to solve, and which from a very early period of his life he had profoundly considered. What did the solution involve?

It involved a desperate struggle with the most powerful monarchy in Europe. Spain was still in the van of the nations. Its treasury was replenished with the virgin spoils of the New World. It was, besides, a great military power. The Spanish soldier was celebrated for his romantic bravery,

> No man's trespasses thou forgivest;
> Revenge is the food on which thou livest.
> Thou leadest all men into temptation;
> Unto evil thou hast delivered this nation.
> Our Father, in heaven which art,
> Grant that this hellish devil may soon depart—
> And with him his Council false and bloody,
> Who make murder and rapine their daily study—
> And all his savage war-dogs of Spain,
> Oh, send them back to the devil, their father, again. Amen!

and his discipline was equal to his valour. No more effective or reliable troops could then be obtained. But, like the government he served, he was cruel, faithless, licentious. Both the rulers and the ruled were rotten to the core. Such a spectacle of absolute unrighteousness as the court of Spain then presented, has seldom, before or since, let us be grateful to God, been witnessed on this earth. It had thus, sown within itself, the seeds of death. But as yet its front was imposing. The Spanish monarchy still carried the impress of the master-hand of Charles; the Spanish soldier, in his glittering mask of invincible steel, still bore himself as the companion of Cortes.

It was this gigantic empire, concentrating all its forces to crush the civil and religious liberties of the Netherlands, that Orange had to meet in a mortal conflict. He did meet it, and he was not worsted. Standing at bay on the extremest limit of habitable earth, his feet washed by the stormy waters of the Northern Sea, a few thousand undisciplined boors and wild sailors behind him, he drove back the chivalry of Spain, and laid among the waves the foundations of the great naval commonwealth. Such a spectacle fascinates the imagination. We cannot but ask—How was it possible for one man to achieve so great a work?

For it was in truth a single man who did the whole work. In the war of liberation William the Silent is not only the central, but the sole figure. He finished his task unaided and alone. "I have no one to help me," he writes on one occasion, "not a single man,—

> Donec eris felix, multos numerabis amicos,
> Tempora cum erunt nubila, nullus erit."

His means were of the scantiest. The material which he had to use was often of the sorriest kind. The nobles were commonly hostile; the people not seldom apathetic. Historical conjectures are particularly unprofitable; but it may be safely asserted that had Orange not lived, Holland would not have been freed. Sullen and scattered outbursts of the popular indignation would no doubt have taken place. But it needed the consummate craft and the unselfish devotion of the Prince, to sublime a wild foray of "the sea-beggars" into a national deliverance.

The nobility were not to be trusted. They were selfish, unprincipled, and embarrassed. Of all the inheritors of brilliant historical names who had crowded the saloons of the Nassau palace before the evil days, not half-a-dozen remained constant to the end. The commonwealth of Holland did not number a single knight of the Golden Fleece, except the Prince, amid its founders. In the earliest stages of the conflict the nobles no doubt took the lead. There was something picturesque and fantastic, something characteristic of a sprightly and imaginative people, in the forms which the popular dissatisfaction at first assumed. This may be attributed to the nobility. A splendid and turbulent aristocracy could relish the stinging satire of Simon Renard, could stamp, with the sanction of fashion, fanciful symbols and rhetorical protests. It was Egmont who devised, to ridicule the unpopular Cardinal, the celebrated foolscap livery. Count Brederode, happily appropriating the reproach of Berlaymont, originated that famous rallying-cry of "The Beggars," which was to become the watchword of a whole nation. But as the stream broadened and deepened, and grew every day more swollen and turbid, brilliant epigrams and courtly jests lost their value. The nobles could neither understand nor control the passions which they had helped to arouse; and, leaving Orange and his brothers almost alone with that "vile and mischievous animal called the people," the Catholic and Conservative aristocracy rallied round the king, who had betrayed their liberties, and butchered their countrymen.

Yet the characters of many of these men are not without interest to us. Even Brederode, the wild masquerader, the reckless buffoon, who held that every political campaign must terminate with a debauch, and who hated "the water of the fountain" as he hated the Spaniards and the Bishops, was at times brave, generous, and tender-hearted. Renneberg could be guilty of treason to his friend; but as he stood in the grey dawn on the square of the Gröningen, men noticed that he was "ghastly as a corpse." He was at least no coward; it was no craven fear that blanched his cheek; it was rather the *angina pectoris*, the mortal anguish, of the brave man, who knows that he has betrayed his honour. The moody Horn, who died on the same scaffold with Egmont, was no favourite with the people; and when the crowd were washing the coffin of his companion with their tears, and kissing it as though it had

been the shrine of a saint, the body of the Admiral was left, deserted and unwatched, in the chancel of St Gudule. But his surly honesty and truthfulness were perhaps of more sterling worth than any of his fellow-sufferer's more captivating qualities. Egmont was certainly a dashing soldier; he had generous instincts, and the lofty character of Orange sometimes kindled him into momentary greatness; but he was fickle, vacillating, and vainglorious, and as a statesman he failed utterly. Art and poetry have touched his name with their shining lines; his death no doubt was heroic, and the last letter of Lamoral D'Egmont—"Ready to die"—to the sovereign who had doomed him to death, is that of a calm and magnanimous gentleman; still, it cannot be denied that it would have been better for his fame had the soldier fallen on one of his earlier battle-fields—in the rapid charge at St Quentin, or in the wild *mêlée* on the wet sands at Gravelines.

It was on the nation, then, that Orange was forced to rely; and the Netherlanders, as a whole, were barely more reliable than their chiefs. Coleridge has vividly described the difficulties which beset the leader who depends on the unorganised force of the people—"the inconsistencies, the weaknesses, the bursts of heroism, followed by prostration and cowardice, which invariably characterise all popular efforts." To all these, in aggravated forms, Orange had to submit. And the Netherlanders were jealous not only of the Spaniards, but of each other. The estates were constantly squabbling, and the fat burghers who filled their ranks could seldom, even in the great crises of the revolution, rise above their habitual parsimony. Provincial jealousies and provincial enmities proved on more than one occasion nearly fatal to a cause whose success demanded perfect union and unselfishness, and, despite all the efforts of Orange, ultimately marred the symmetry of the edifice which he reared. "These men of butter," as Alva irreverently called them, were, moreover, bad soldiers in the field. A single Spanish column frequently routed an entire army of Netherlanders. Holland and Zeland, indeed, were always constant to their Prince. Even on the field their hardy burghers and wind-beaten mariners could look the Spaniard in the face; while behind the gates of their cities—behind the gates of Haarlem, and Alkmaar, and Leyden—they proved themselves invincible. The heroic magnanimity, with which simple citizens fought and

died upon their rotten walls, was worthy of the man who led them. Driven into this corner of the earth, the hunted burghers turned, and displayed a valour and a constancy which rival "all Greek, all Roman fame," and remain memorable for ever.

It is often difficult for the historian to use simple language. His imagination is fascinated by his hero's greatness; and in describing the famous orator or the consummate captain, his speech acquires a glow, which hides, perhaps, as much as it reveals. Writing about Orange, one is constantly tempted to commit this error; to employ terms which, though not untrue, fail to impress, because not minutely characteristic. He was so truly and unaffectedly great that one is only able to say, as it were, "Here is a great man, a great soldier, a great statesman," and so to pass on. But that greatness is not rightly understood until we lay aside the courtly trappings of history, and speak in unambitious words of those qualities of his intellect and heart which history does not deem the heroic.

As to the qualities on which History does condescend to bestow her distinguished regard, there need be little discussion. Orange's capacity as a *soldier* cannot be seriously impeached. He was pitted against the first commanders of his age. Alva was his earliest antagonist; and the gaunt and sallow Duke was one of Charles's veterans. Till he came to the Netherlands he had never been worsted; on many a Pagan and Christian battle-field he had triumphed; more than once his eagle eye and tiger-like heart had nerved his beaten soldiers, turned the tide of victory, and saved the monarchy. Vehement and bloodthirsty by nature, only on the battle-field did he manifest perfect self-restraint. The ferocious executioner, who sent maidens and matrons to the stake, who spilt the blood of the tenderest and noblest like water, never threw away the life of a single trooper. His Fabian tactics not unfrequently exposed him to the reproaches of the hot-headed among his own men; but, as he himself said, he heeded not "the babble of soldiers"—the last and rarest virtue in a general. But even Alva, everywhere else the victor, left the Netherlands a baffled man. Don John of Austria, who followed him, did not fare better. The beautiful and fascinating son of the Emperor, the hero of Lepanto, who had captured the sacred standard of the Prophet, and shaken the supremacy of the Crescent, was foiled and outwitted by the subtle brain of William. And even the splendid military

genius of Alexander of Parma, the most patient, temperate, fearless, and unscrupulous of men, could not turn the scale against the Netherlander. With a few foreign mercenaries who could not be relied on, and a few unarmed burghers who *could*, the Prince of Orange drove back the invincible legions of Spain, led by their most consummate captains.

His military capacity was chiefly shown in his power of combination. His keen eye detected at a glance that the ruinous tower, the unwalled city, the desolate sandbank, was the key to the position, and before the enemy had discovered its value, his troops were massed around it; it was strengthened, provisioned, manned. Then for months the tide of battle surged around the devoted spot, while the Prince and his little army lay in the rear, ready to aid, and able to retreat. And it was Orange who saw—probably sooner, and certainly more clearly than any other man—the peculiar strength of his own position. He threw himself confidently upon the *sea*. This was the characteristic of the struggle, and from this its most picturesque features are derived. The war was a war in which sea-born men invoked the aid of the sea. The wild "sea-beggars," who never took or gave quarter, who proclaimed by the Crescents in their caps that they would rather serve the Turk than the Pope, were the most skilful sailors in the world, and kept the Spaniards imprisoned on the shore. Across the wintry meres the Hollander on his swift skates glided noiselessly to assail his enemy. Amphibious battles were fought, in which the rising tide sometimes dealt more death than the weapons of the combatants. At length, the estates, urged on and animated by Orange, resolved on a grand act of self-sacrifice. Leyden was beleaguered. If Leyden fell, Holland fell, and Leyden was at the point of death. It was determined that the great dykes, which had been raised with infinite labour to repel the storms of the ocean, should be broken down. They were levelled. The country was flooded. A fleet of two hundred vessels sailed over fruitful pastures, and fields yellow with corn. The besiegers found themselves besieged—found the water, day after day, rising about their feet—found the dry land, day after day, receding behind them. A great fear fell upon them. They were contending not only against man, but against the ocean. They raised the siege, and fled. Leyden was relieved. Holland was saved.

Friend and foe have owned that William, if not the ablest, was one of the ablest statesmen of his age. Granvelle was Orange's most astute opponent; and Granvelle quickly penetrated the character of his rival. "'Tis a man of profound genius, vast ambition—dangerous, acute, politic"—the Cardinal told Philip at an early period. Cautious, subtle, and adroit, gifted with an even temper and a superhuman restraint, the Prince was the model of a diplomatist. "They say he cannot sleep," some one once observed of him, and in a sense the saying was true. For he was "aye ready;" no crisis ever took him unprepared. He read the consequences of events, and the motives of men, with singular penetration. In that last interview between him and Egmont, which poetry and fiction have done their best to immortalise, he is said to have described, with prescient sagacity, the terrible tragedy that was drawing on, and to have solemnly warned his friend of the end that was in store. It was in vain; whether blinded by a fatal credulity, or detained, as Goethe has represented him, by a sense of honour to his king, the Count would not listen to the warning; and quitting the Prince, he returned to his doom. The most secret thoughts and actions of Philip were laid bare to Orange. A master of the arts of political intrigue, he had established a system of espionage at the Spanish Court; and not even in his cabinet or his bed-chamber did the king escape the sleepless eye of his watchful foe. *Finesse* was met by *finesse*, intrigue by intrigue, the mines dug by the Cardinal and the Prince of Eboli were countermined by William. Than his steady fencing with Don John no better example of his masterly political tact could be selected. Don John had come to the Netherlands as the messenger of mercy. But Orange from the first saw through the hollow pretence. The Spaniard desired to strengthen his hands by peace only that he might the more securely prepare for war. "War," the Prince at once said, "is preferable to a doubtful peace;" but he had to wait until the eyes of his countrymen, dazzled by the youthful hero, were opened; and the reserve in which he intrenched himself, the masterly art with which he "did nothing," were admirable and entirely successful. Don John soon felt that he was within the toils of a more expert fowler. His dread of that wily hunter, and the frantic struggles which the caged lion made to liberate himself from the net, broke the soldier's heart. The brilliant hero of

Lepanto aged early, and died, like Pitt, "an old man," while yet in the prime of manhood. His deathbed, despite his weaknesses and insincerities, cannot be looked upon without a feeling of commiseration. "Tossing upon his uneasy couch, he again arranged, in imagination, the combinations of great battles; again shouted his orders to rushing squadrons; and listened with brightening eye to the trumpet of victory." He died; while the serene and inexorable foe went on to finish his work.

There is nothing more characteristic in Orange's career than his progressive development—his gradual advance in feeling and opinion. He is in his earlier years a magnificent and princely gentleman, a fitting representative of great historic houses, both in France and the Netherlands, a nobleman given to hospitality, disposed to lead a secure and easy life, and not feeling that he has any other duties in particular to attend to. But the evil days of the persecution arrive, and stir the heart of the Netherlander. The dispute does not interest him much; whether a man be a Calvinist or a Catholic seems to him a matter of considerable indifference; perhaps upon the whole he thinks a gentleman should die in the faith to which he is bred; but he detests tyranny, and hates murder, and so he cannot but oppose the tyrannical and murderous policy of Philip. At last the moral problem of the Reformation forces itself upon him. What does it all mean? Whence comes this wonderful constancy, which nerves unlettered men and feeble women to die at the stake for an *opinion?* The spirit which is strangely stirring the nations touches the Prince also. He ceases to be a subject of Philip and the Pope. He becomes a rebel and a Protestant —a great sufferer, and a mighty leader. The mild and tranquil temper has been exalted by torture into the heroic.

But Orange, when he leagued himself with the Reformation, rose above the Reformers. Of all the men of his age, he was the only one who rightly comprehended the principle which the Reformation asserted, which gave it any permanent vitality, which made it anything more than a mere sanitary reform—a bill for whitewashing the monasteries, and scrubbing the men who dwelt in them. But this idea—the idea of spiritual freedom and individual responsibility—was no sooner asserted than it was abandoned. The moment the Protestant ceased to be persecuted, he began to persecute. The apologists of the early

Reformers tell us that this was inevitable, that they were no worse than their neighbours, that the doctrine of religious liberty was the slow growth of a gentler and more tolerant age. But they forget that there was at least one man among the Reformers who understood that doctrine well, and who strenuously strove to enforce it on his contemporaries. William of Orange was the earliest teacher of toleration. On this subject nothing can be more admirable than his logic, except his practice. "Should we obtain power over any city or cities," he wrote in 1568 to his confidential agent, "let the communities of Papists be as much respected and protected as possible. Let them be overcome, not by violence, but with gentle-mindedness, and virtuous treatment." The Anabaptist was regarded with a peculiar hostility in that age, but Orange sternly denounced punishment against any who should molest even an Anabaptist. "We declare to you, therefore," he wrote to the magistracy of Middelburgh, "that you have no right to trouble yourselves with any man's conscience, so long as nothing is done to cause private harm, or public scandal. We therefore expressly ordain that you desist from troubling these Baptists, from offering hindrance to their handicraft and daily trades by which they may earn bread for their wives and children; and that you permit them henceforth to open their shops, and to do their work according to the custom of former days. Beware, therefore, of disobedience, and of resistance to the ordinance which we now establish." In this, as in some other respects, Orange absolutely *towers* above any, the greatest of his contemporaries. His friend, Sainte Aldegonde, was a man of the most versatile abilities—a poet, an orator, a theologian, a fine scholar, a subtle diplomatist—and yet the Prince's liberality vexed and irritated him. "The affair of the Anabaptist," he writes, "has been renewed. The Prince objects to exclude them from citizenship. He answered me sharply that their yea was equal to our oath, and that we should not press this matter unless we were willing to confess that it was just for the Papists to compel us to a divine service which was against our conscience. In short, I don't see how we can accomplish our wish in this matter. The Prince has uttered reproaches to me that our clergy are striving to obtain a mastery over consciences. He praised lately the saying of a monk who was not long ago here, that our pot had not gone to the fire as often as that of our

antagonists, but that when the time came it would be black enough. In short, the Prince fears that after a few centuries the clerical tyranny on both sides will stand in this respect on the same footing." It is impossible to read these sentences without surprise—surprise that such a noble temperance should have been possible in that age—but with double surprise that, when thus admirably enforced, the doctrine should have appeared strange and repulsive to the most accomplished gentleman among the Protestant leaders. The Prince's efforts to secure a religious peace, an Emancipation Act, were not unsuccessful; and that "every man should remain free and unquestioned as to his religion," was the basis on which the Dutch Constitution was framed.[1]

Nor was this singular temperance the fruit, as it sometimes is, of a spirit of scepticism. The Prince was profoundly devout. In all his triumphs, in all his reverses, he showed the most sincere and simple confidence in God's providence. He never doubted that his cause—the cause of freedom and righteousness —would ultimately prevail. "That the desired end will be reached if you hold fast your resolution, and take to heart the means that God presents to you, *I feel to be absolutely certain.*" He beheld, like all the early reformers and martyrs, in defeat, in victory, in the senate, on the battle-field, the immediate working of a Divine hand. "Nevertheless," he wrote to his brother Louis,[2] after the disastrous rout at Jemmingen, "since

[1] It has been said that Orange became a liberal in politics very much as he became a reformer in religion. Toleration was *forced* upon him. To a man in his position—the leader of a cause which embraced various religious factions—the policy of "civil and religious liberty" was the only practicable or safe policy. I think that his life cannot be read in this way. Toleration to the Prince was never a political necessity alone. He was constitutionally tolerant; bigotry in belief, narrowness or absolutism in any shape, were hateful to his mild and liberal nature. He saw from the first that St Paul's scheme of Christian liberty was eternally true, as well as locally expedient.

[2] Count Louis of Nassau, "the Bayard of the Netherlands," is the most chivalrous figure in the war. The fire of the soldier, the simplicity of the child, the keen wit of the courtier, and the gay *abandon* of the roving *chevalier*, are happily blended in his character. His heroism was as bright, and rapid, and sparkling as his wit. When the battle of Jemmingen was lost he swam across the Ems almost alone, and escaped into Germany. To Count Louis may probably be attributed a famous historical repartee. The Count and certain other Commissioners, empowered by Orange, were negotiating with the

it has thus pleased God, it is necessary to have patience, and to lose not courage; conforming ourselves to His divine will—as for my part, I have determined to do in everything which may happen, still proceeding onward in our work with His almighty aid." The fall of Zierickzee was a source of deep regret to Orange. "Had we received the least succour in the world," he said, "the poor city should never have fallen. I could get nothing from France or England with all my efforts. Nevertheless, we do not lose courage, but hope that, although abandoned by all the world, the Lord God will extend His right hand over us." "One must do one's best," he writes on another occasion, "and believe that when such misfortunes happen, God desires to prove us. If He sees that we do not lose our courage, He will assuredly help us. Had we thought otherwise, we should never have pierced the dykes on a memorable occasion, for it was an uncertain thing, and a great sorrow for the poor people: yet did God bless the undertaking. He will bless us still, for His arm has not been shortened." When the beleaguered fishermen of Alkmaar wrote to him for aid, he replies in that tone of grave and lofty enthusiasm so characteristic of his eloquence,—"As, notwithstanding our efforts, it has pleased God Almighty to dispose of Haarlem according to His divine will, shall we therefore deny and deride His holy Word? Has the strong arm of the Lord thereby grown weaker? Has His Church therefore come to nought? You ask if I have entered into a firm treaty with any great king or potentate, to which I answer, that before ever I took up the cause of the distressed Christians in these provinces, I had entered into a close alliance with the King of kings; and I am firmly convinced that all who put their trust in Him shall be saved by His almighty hand. The God of armies will raise up armies for us to do battle with our enemies and His own." Sentences like these are surely worthy of preservation—surely

French Court, soon after the massacre of St Bartholomew. They insisted upon guarantees being given. "Is the word of a king," asked Catherine of Medicis, indignantly, "is the word of a king not sufficient?" "No, Madam," was the reply, "*by Saint Bartholomew*, no!" Count Louis, and his young brother, Augustus, perished at the battle of Mook—the battle whose fatal termination had been presaged by the phantom fight upon the heavens, which so disquieted the worthy burghers of Utrecht.

deserve to be studied by all who would fain hear through "the babble of this Babel" the voice of a Divine leader.

It is not to be wondered at that a man, so inspired, should have been constant in calamity. Sometimes anxious *before*, he was always tranquil *after*, the struggle began. In the darkest hour of his fortunes, the grave equanimity of his temper, his singular serenity and cheerfulness, roused the hopes, and cheered the hearts, of his countrymen. *Mens æqua in arduis*, the friends of Warren Hastings wrote under the picture of the great proconsul in the council chamber at Calcutta. The motto would have fitted Orange; but the one which the Hollander delights to associate with the patriot prince—*Sævis tranquillus in undis*—is perhaps even more characteristic. Across the stormy waters of that bleak and weather-beaten shore, the beacon flashed its tranquil light, guiding the strong, and strengthening those who were ready to perish.

The value of a character like this, not alone to his own countrymen, but to us and to all time, it is difficult to overrate. It is so seldom that the hero of a religious revolution is not a bigot or a fanatic! Some of the worst crimes, many of the most childish blunders, that history records, have been committed by these men. They too frequently, moreover, excite our contempt and indignation by their conceited rejection of what they are pleased to call "the weapons of the flesh." *The sword of the Lord and of Gideon* has sometimes been drawn with wisdom and cunning; it is oftener, however, the watchword of men who, by their own fanatical folly and negligence, invite the defeat which they merit and suffer. But here, at last, is a religious hero of quite another stamp—a man of God, and yet a man of the world; a soldier of the Cross, and yet a sagacious captain; a good Christian, and yet a great statesman; profoundly devout, and yet profoundly politic. "I do not," he exclaims emphatically, "calumniate those who tell us to put our trust in God. That is my opinion also. But it *is* trusting God to use the means which He places in our hands, and to ask that His blessing may come upon them."

In his secular, as in his religious, politics, the Prince was at issue with his contemporaries. Distrust of "that vile and mischievous animal called the people," was the prevailing sentiment among the statesmen of the age. Orange, when he renounced Philip, did not raise a revolutionary standard: he did not desire

to establish any new or democratic scheme of government; he was a Conservative leader; *Je maintiendrai* was the device of his policy as of his escutcheon. But though an aristocrat by birth, and bred in a despotic camp, he was always anxious—unaffectedly, earnestly anxious—to refer his policy for ratification to the great body of the people. He never flattered them; he unsparingly attacked their vices; but, feeling that he perfectly trusted them, they trusted him in return with an entire devotion. "Men in their utmost need," he writes, "daily come to me for refuge, as if I held power over all things in my hand." How far can the people be relied on? still remains the central question of representative government. The answer seldom raises the true issue. With a real *leader*, like Orange, we may make reply, we need not fear the people, but until we can find a few authentic leaders, we had best keep our constituencies as manageable and select as possible. Not having many such men at this present, it remains to be seen whether the experiments we are now making can prove altogether satisfactory.

Such was the *pater patriæ*, as portrayed in his most familiar letters. Eloquent letters they are; admirably clear and simple, sometimes warmed to a fine heat by earnestness and indignation, yet never violent nor intemperate. His public despatches are eloquent also; the successive appeals which he addressed to the Provinces, and to Europe, are perhaps the most memorable series of Public Papers ever written by a statesman.

But are we to leave his faults, weaknesses, vices, unrecorded? His enemies have attempted to blacken his character, but with no considerable success. They have said that he was over-cautious, a coward, a man devoured by a selfish ambition. Cautious he was; no man who is not so is entitled to be a leader; but his caution was not the niggardly and ungenerous prudence of a cold-blooded or sluggish temperament. The caution which Orange manifested was the firmness to restrain premature sympathy and unavailing indignation, and to bide the time when action could become effective. This restraint is not "a careful vice;" it is, on the contrary, a rare virtue, a high and powerful effort of the reason. For to leave the provocation unresented, and to hold back till the appointed hour is ripe, is infinitely harder than to obey the natural instinct, and to throw one's self, blindly, impulsively, with a wild cry of hatred and despair, into the *mêlée*. Orange was "the Taciturn," until it was time to make his voice heard; and his tongue, like his pen,

was eloquent; *then* there was no lack of decision and plain-speaking.

The charge of cowardice is still more marvellous. If William was by nature timid and sensitive, as some have affirmed, the constancy of his heroism becomes all the more memorable. There is no nobler spectacle in this world than that of the trembling and shrinking martyr, shivering with terror as the flames gather round the faint limbs, yet to the end constant to her God. Be sure that such an offering is not less acceptable to Him who holds up "the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees," than the confident and unfaltering witness of the strong man, who goes to the stake with a song of thanksgiving on his lips and a sense of triumph in his heart. And to assert that the Prince of Orange embarked in the revolutionary war to gratify his cupidity and his ambition, can only be credited by those who believe that to sacrifice place, power, fortune, friends, for a country's freedom, is the token of covetousness, and to refuse with even too constant pertinacity "a kingly crown," the headmark of ambition. Such charges refute themselves, and may be left to the oblivion they bespeak.

We are not, indeed, solicitous to show that William was altogether blameless. Happily, few heroes, beyond the school-girl's imagination, are. There may have been a savour of worldliness and over-anxious policy in that simple disinterestedness, in that lofty patriotism. It may have been so; yet when we know that a man is essentially heroic and vitally noble, an alloy of weakness, nay, of baseness, does not lessen our regard. "*They* may sit," says Sir Thomas Browne, "in the orchestra and noblest seats of Heaven, who have held up shaking hands in the fire, and humanly contended for glory."

In fine, the character of "Father William" is one which, in all its aspects, it is pleasant and profitable to contemplate. The lofty and spacious dome of that forehead concealed a profound intelligence; but the heart was meek and tender as a woman's. "*There I will make my sepulchre,*" he said, when for the last time the fugitive and the outlaw returned to the land which he was to save. There he *has* made his sepulchre—his body is enshrined in its dust, his memory in the hearts of its people. The anointed murderer might thunder the ban against the rebel, might defame his career, and bribe his assassin. But the story was already written. Unnoted by tyrant and bigot, his name had been "enrolled in the Capitol."

THE ROSES OF KILRAVOCK.

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HUNTING about among old essays and old papers for the material of the present volume, I came upon some notices of early English and Scottish life —the England and Scotland of our forefathers. The severe Muse of History is somewhat intolerant of "local colour;" yet a social and municipal history of our ancestors, reflecting as in a glass the life they led, would not be without interest to the student of human nature; and —even in Scotland—the materials for such a history are still more or less attainable. There are local chronicles and family histories in abundance; there are the charters of the old earls who fought with the sea-kings; there are the archives of the rich abbey which the great house endowed that the uneasy souls of the clansmen might have rest; there are the records of the burgh-magistracies, which show how the wealthy traders and the skilful artificers gradually emancipated themselves from the feudal servitude, and consolidated the elements out of which modern society has sprung:—how to resolve these into a systematic survey of English and Scottish life as it has transacted itself in Grange and Cottage,

among Norfolk fens and Border mosses, for a good many hundred years back, is a problem which some future historical student with plenty of spare time on his hands may be left to solve. Meantime I may include in this volume, if space permits, a few of these fragmentary sketches, which will serve at least to indicate how and on what terms such a picture may be put together.

Lord Macaulay's picture of the ancient gentry of the north, though pointed and effective, is not agreeable. They regarded murder and robbery as graceful and pleasing recreations. They devoured oatmeal, and drank the blood of living cows; they warmed their filthy bodies before fuel dug out of a morass; they were covered with cutaneous eruptions and a preparation of pitch. The plague of lice was upon the land, and the lord of a hundred hills was cruelly afflicted by the itch!

One conspicuous misconception has, in this, as in other cases, tainted Lord Macaulay's estimate. External polish and refinement are most deceptive tests of a healthy national culture. Despots may surround themselves with the amenities of material civilisation and yet remain barbarians; a man may be wise, sagacious, and politic, who eats his black bread off a pewter plate, and swallows his black broth with a wooden ladle.

> "Aut quis
> Simpuvium ridere Numæ, nigrumque catinum
> Ausus erat?"

Lord Macaulay, we think, is too much disposed to sneer at the wooden spoon and the black trencher. Even the artist will discover in the contrast between the homeliness of the environment and the vigour and sagacity of the life a measure of picturesque interest.

The evidence, moreover, on which the historian expects us to accept his delineation of the social life of the North, is not only eminently suspicious in itself, but absurdly inadequate when relied on to condemn the character of a whole people. Two kinds of contemporary evidence may be made available for historic purposes. There are, in the first place, those doc-

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uments which arose naturally out of the ordinary necessities of society, and which contain an unembellished narrative of the facts which formed part of the routine of daily life. Charters, household accounts, Acts of Parliament, minutes of civil or ecclesiastical assemblies, were made for use and not for effect, and are therefore perfectly simple, unambitious, and genuine. But ephemeral squibs and satires, black-letter ballads and broadsheets, do not contain authentic materials for history, and require, when occasionally resorted to for subordinate purposes, to be very jealously interrogated and scrutinised. Lord Macaulay, we believe, has miscalculated the relative value of these documents. He has consulted too many broadsheets and too few charters. A charter never caricatures; whereas to the party wit or satirist, caricature is as the breath of his nostrils. The history of a country is not exactly the history of its light literature. What would we think of the historian who, aided solely by *Punch*, should undertake to chronicle even the *fashions* of the present century? Our ladies, "stiff with hoops, and armed with ribs of whale," are round enough in all conscience;[1] they will swell to utterly monstrous proportions in the pages of the second Lord Macaulay. And yet the illustration does not adequately set forth the falseness of the impression produced. For we are *en rapport* with the satirist. We know what the truth is, and we tone down and fill in the picture accordingly. Our experience unconsciously disengages what is accurate from what is inaccurate in the artist's work. But posterity cannot do this. To them the limpid, elastic, and transparent stream which flows past our feet will be petrified into stone. *Punch* will be an altogether different book to them than it is to us. The picture of our society that they will find in it will not be the same that we do. The attire will grow much more fantastic; the slang infinitely more inveterate. We say,—"How true the caricature of Doyle, or Leech, or Thackeray is!" and, limited to the speakers who sift with unsuspecting accuracy the light, and delicate, and masterly shades of exaggeration in which these artists indulge, the observation is perfectly just; but if our children believe us, they will form a sadly erroneous notion of how their grandfathers and grandmothers looked in the year of grace 1858.

[1] 1858.

The histories of many of the great houses were written by humble retainers, the parish clerk or the castle chaplain, who devoted years of patient love and labour to marshalling the ancestry and burnishing the ensigns of their chiefs. Several of these have been recently published by the antiquarian societies; others are in the course of publication; and, illustrated as they are by old charters and records, they furnish most valuable material for historic investigation. Had Lord Macaulay availed himself more frequently of their aid, had he relied less on the party squib, the scurrilous ballad, and the gossip of bewildered Cockneys, he would have communicated a more accurate, if not a more vivid, picture of the past. The Roses of Kilravock lived on the frontier of Badenoch, the famous stronghold of the clan Chattan, and were intimately connected with many of the great Highland families; let us glance into the interior of their keep, and see what the old Scottish country life was really like. "Nothing extenuate, nor set down aught in malice."

The keep of Kilravock stands on the thickly wooded bank that overhangs the valley of the Nairn. It is an imposing though somewhat heavy mass of masonry; a clumsy manor-house in the architectural style of a later century having been tagged on to the square crenelated keep, built by Hugh, the seventh baron, in the fifteenth century, and designed by that parvenu Earl of Mar who was hanged by the old nobility in his own scarf over the Brig of Lauder. The castle was erected shortly after the passing, in 1426, of the famous ordinance against absentees, whereby it was enacted that the nobles should reside on their estates, "for the gracious governal of their landis by good polising, and to expend the fruit of the landis in the cuntre where the landis lie;" an enactment that was probably necessitated by the passion for foreign service which animated the Scotch gentry. The Roses selected a pleasant site for their habitation. The oak and the maple flourish luxuriantly; the peaceful stream wanders quietly through the green strath, and below the battered and blackened walls whose shadow it repeats; the terraced garden along the rocky bank is sweet with the fragrance of English violets, planted by fair Mistress Muriel or Eufame of the olden time.

Until the advent of the Black Baron, who lived in the Reformation time, the individual Kilravocks are not very clearly to be distinguished. They grant charters, and settle marches, and

stamp the Lions of Ross or the three stars of Moravia on documents which they cannot sign. Sometimes they "masterfullie spulyie and away take" the goods of their neighbours; at others they invoke a reluctant redress from the law for a "spulyie" or "hership" on their own. They inflict summary punishment on offenders who burn their heather or trespass on their forest rights. When devoutly inclined they put up their petitions in the castle chapel, where service is twice a-week performed by the Vicar of Dalcross. The ladies weave elaborate tapestries, and wear gowns and kirtles of damask; their lords hunt, and hawk, and consume no small amount of "Muskatin, Allacant, and Caprick wine." They seldom leave home, except when one of the clan is being tried for murder or stouthrief before the Lord Justices in Edinburgh, when the Laird goes up with a score or two of retainers at his heels, "to advyse" with the accused. They marry and are given in marriage, and the nuptial preliminaries are simple and expeditious. The Wolf of Badenoch—the younger Wolf—set the example of rough wooing. He laid hands on the now famous Isabel of Mar in her own Castle of Kildrummie. Mural, the only child of the last Thane of Cawdor, and the greatest match of her day, was forcibly carried off from her guardian by Argyle, who married her to one of his sons. A family feud was commonly patched up by a family wedding. One of the many Hughs of the Roses—they were all Hughs, indeed, father and son, for five hundred years—"spulyied the lands and biggins" of the famous laird of Cromarty; and afterwards, when the matter grew serious, compromised it by marrying his son to one of Urquhart's daughters. Nor was liberty of selection entirely excluded. Another Hugh, for instance, was contracted when a boy; the terms of the bond being that he was to marry either Janet or Catherine Falconer, "whichever should appear most expedient or speedful;" not a bad provision in a bargain of the kind.

The chiefs of potent northern houses appear in the earlier pages whose very names are now forgotten; others whose power has waned, whose fortunes have fallen into decay. The Comyns, the Keiths, the Earls of March, the Earls of Ross, and many more, have either no representatives among our modern aristocracy, or on the shoulders of a parvenu peer the historic title sits badly. Most of them derived their descent

from a Continental ancestry. Cheyne, Hay, and Gordon were of French extraction. The Macallum More came from Italy,—Campbell, or de Campo Bello. So did the Sinclairs. In a charter of 1391, relating to Newburgh on the Ythan, which at that time belonged to them, the granter is termed, "Henricus de Sancto Claro, Comes Orcadie, et Dominus de Roslyn,"—a superb and chivalrous title. The Earl of Huntly, the chief of the clan Gordon, was then the *grand seigneur* of the north; and his possessions were immense, even before James II. granted him the whole district of Badenoch for his services against the rebels, or as the King phrased it, "for keeping the crown upon our head."

These early Lairds of Kilravock were hard-headed, hard-handed gentry; and not many of them merited the eulogium which the family historian pronounced on one of the clan, "as to that and many other troubles, God carrying him through, though in the way of suffering, he was *patiendo victor*,"—the greater number being better skilled in the use of a different weapon. The Reformation age, however, raised a Rose of another type. "The Black Baron" was, like the Church of England, a compromise. He fought, indeed, at Pinkie, in his hot youth; it was the only time he ever committed himself. He was trusted by both parties; and when it is remembered that he lived through the reign of Mary and the regency of Murray, it will be admitted that the art of "trimming" early attained maturity. He had numerous correspondents all over Scotland, whom he committed impartially to the keeping of the Almighty, no matter to what faction they belonged. These correspondents (his lady is not among them, for she cannot sign her name, and in her last will and testament her hand is guided by the clerk) write well and gracefully,—the clear idiomatic diction of our old legal authors, at once cautious and copious. The Baron's life was long as it was wary, and he had attained a great age before he deemed it expedient to "commit his soul to the eternal God, and his body to be buried within the chapel of Geddes."

During the next century Kilravock presents the appearance of a great farm-steading. The Lairds begin to cultivate agricultural pursuits, and their inventories of stock are by no means contemptible. They write letters to learned counsel in Edinburgh, to country neighbours at Brodie or Lovat, to

"dearest cousins," trusting that they are not quite indifferent to the young laird; and the letters read wonderfully like those that continue to be written by the well-fed, well-bred gentlemen-farmers of the present day. They are passionately fond of music; so they send their daughters to school in Edinburgh, where the young ladies are taught "dancing, singing, playing, and virginalls," at an expense of £12 the quarter. They affect literature, moreover—a taste acquired at the Grammar School of Nairn, or at Dugald Dalgetty's Marischal College of Aberdeen,—and "*Horace* at £1, 12s., *Virgil* £1, 16s., *Juvenal* and *Persius* 14s., *Buchannan's Psalms* 13s. 4d., *Confession of Faith* £1," are added to the Castle library; while the *News Letter* arrives periodically, with its gossip anent the army and the Parliament. The fashion of wooing has changed since the Wolf's time; and Mary Rose meets young Duncan Forbes at the trysting-stone in the birch wood—as other Marys have done since. In public affairs, though constitutionally cautious, they incline to the Covenanting side. The fourteenth laird marries a daughter of Innes of Edingicht, who brings the Scriptural phraseology of that family into her husband's house, and has left a vast mass of clandestine correspondence, which she held with those of her own persuasion in the "hard years" after the Restoration; letters with disguised addresses, "For the Lady Park," with earnest directions "to read and burn," with initialled signatures only, as "L. D."—"L. D." representing, we are told, a certain Lilias Dunbar; a charming devotee, we take the liberty to believe, who no doubt found, as other fair saints have found more recently, a pleasant outlet for her warm feelings in a little pretty fanaticism, rendered then all the more piquant and exciting by the danger, mystery, and intrigue it involved.

Hugh the Seventeenth, who brings us down to the middle of the last century, married Miss Betsy Clephane, whose brother, the Doctor, was a man of science and letters, and an active Member of the Royal Society. Hugh's mother had been all her life delicate and sickly; and her accounts with the village apothecary for "tussilago flowers, maiden-hair, mouse-ear, horse-tail, John's wort, penny-royal, Althea-root, white lily-root," and other forgotten simples, are still extant. His father combined the *bon-vivant* and the *littérateur*. He added in one year four hundred volumes to the library; his house-

hold accounts are scribbled over with scraps of Greek from the *Odyssey;* he had a great respect for Mr Addison's opinions; and he corresponded with Professor Blackwell of Aberdeen, who wrote him in reply, hearty, lively, sagacious epistles, bristling with French, Latin, and Hellenic inscriptions. On the other hand, he was rebuked by the Synod for sitting over his wine at a county convivial meeting until two o'clock on Sunday morning; and he and Colonel Rose, during a two days' carouse in the little tavern at the mouth of the Findhorn, drank "2 gills of brandy, 8 pints of ale, and 57 bottles of claret." Clever Lord Lovat, writing a letter of condolence to the son, pronounces the father "an honour to mankind;" and to us, much meditating over the latter exploit, he looms large and portentous, a son of Anak, a giant before the Flood. Of Hanoverian politics, the old laird contrived to stand well with both parties. Prince Charles dined with him shortly before the battle of Culloden. "You have had my *cousin* with you," said Cumberland, who came next day.

Hugh inherited his father's literary tastes at least. He was a good Grecian, and corresponded with Dr Moir about the great Scottish edition of Homer. When Dr Clephane is at Kilravock, the itinerant postman, who arrives pretty regularly now, carries letters thitherward from all parts of the kingdom. From caustic Lord Kames—from Fergusson of Glasgow, the self-taught astronomer—from Lord Sherard Manners, who humorously describes the hunting arrangements of his county, "my lady being huntsman, and Mrs Hunter whipper-in"—from Sir H. Mann, David Hume, Harry Erskine, Gilbert Elliot—letters discoursing of love, war, literature, philosophy, the Review, the Royal Society, and Johnson's *Dictionary.* Gilbert Elliot's, written in a tone of mock solemnity, are especially amusing. "I write you," he says, unconsciously forecasting the style of a great modern critic, "like a man of genius, a few hints, the concise style bordering upon the abrupt, which at length may be *whittled* into obscurity;" and then he goes on to relate how Agis (as he calls the author of *Douglas*) has descended from the dignity of the drama, and figured on Church politics in the General Assembly; and how David Hume wanders disconsolately about a huge library, and is resolved to let the world come to its senses before he honours it with another volume. For the rest, the laird encloses, builds,

gardens, shoots, and fishes during the day; dines at two or three; and of an evening in the drawing-room—the drawing-room has been built for a good many years now—there are his books, his music, his wife sewing and knitting and writing letters (she writes indeed like a sensible woman, though she spells abominably), his boy's lessons, and his little daughter Betsy, who plays on the spinet, though her uncle, the doctor, prefers "the gutarre, or mandolino, as it is called by the London ladies," and is addicted to "cutting paper," a mysterious female occupation of the past, which he considers innocent but trifling, and is especially fond of sliding with her brothers on the ice, but gives it up when he suggests that it may bring her into "unlucky falls and situations." The sedate doctor and his wild little niece form together a very pretty group in this quiet domestic picture.

This little Betsy ultimately (her brothers dying without issue) becomes Lady of Kilravock, and grows quite grand and demure. She is a favourite with the Duke of Gordon and his famous Duchess Jean, who is still so well remembered in the North for her plain-speaking, her eccentric habits, and her kind heart; and she gives, in a letter to a particular friend, a very graphic account of the life led at Gordon Castle by the worthy pair. Mistress Betsy, like the rest of her family, is addicted to literature. Old Lord Kames, gallant and bewigged, fantastic, and yet sparkling with fine sense, vivacity, and *bonhomie*, visits her ladyship sometimes on his way to the Northern Circuit, and brings her the latest intelligence from Edinburgh about the literary men who live there, and the popular new burletta, *Serva Padrona*, in which the celebrated Italian singer, whom they ask to supper after the play and talk to in Latin, has made such a sensation. She reads Mr Hervey's *Contemplations on Night*, *The Whole Duty of Man*, Walpole's *Memoirs*, Dr Johnson's *Poems*, Spence's *Sermons*, and raves about *The Man of Feeling*, which Henry Mackenzie sends her in sheets as it goes through the press. The said Henry is her cousin and earliest correspondent, and his letters are the letters of the superbly polite gentleman, trained at the feet of Sir Charles, who bends benignly over his fair correspondent, and kisses the tips of her rosy fingers. When he comes down to visit her at Kilravock, they dedicate walks to "melancholy," and write fantastic inscriptions, whereof Henry candidly owns that "they

are little more than *mere* poetry, after all." Besides this, her ladyship, being a literary lady, keeps a private Diary of her own, in which she discourses to herself as if she were walking on stilts. We wonder if in those charming morocco-bound and silver-clasped volumes of the present day, into which it is "death for any male thing but to peep," the owners talk much about "the best of parents," "the responses of an agreeable conversation," and "the little circumstances which are of import to the bosom of tenderness,"—as Mistress Betsy was in the habit of doing about the year of grace 1770?

And so Mistress Betsy, and five centuries of the Roses, have passed away; and the little chapel of Geddes where they lie is scarcely any longer to be distinguished. Yet we think we are entitled to say that this picture of an old Scottish "interior," though rude and coarse enough in certain of its lines, is not nearly so repulsive as that which Lord Macaulay asks us to take as genuine. And in particular it proves that civilisation in Scotland was gradually matured, that its progress was regular and coherent, and that there were none of the violent contrasts, the excessive lights and shadows and melodramatic surprises, which modern historians are so anxious to obtain.

CHESTER IN 1488.

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THE changes that have taken place in the aspect of this country since the close of the fifteenth century are sufficiently remarkable. A more complete metamorphosis has not been effected in the character of the English people than in the character of the land which they inhabit. Great forests stretched across whole counties. The traveller might wander for days through the open glades by which they were traversed without encountering a single human habitation, except the wooden lodges of the keepers who protected the game. The Normans, in their passion for field-sports, laid waste entire districts which had been rescued from sterility by the industrious energy of the Saxon; and though the later sovereigns had forced their nobles to adopt a more sagacious policy, so that large tracts in fertile situations had been and were being "disforested;" yet, to the end of Henry's reign, the woods and marshes occupied a good half of the land of England. The fens were of even greater magnitude than the forests. Many of them extended continuously for more than thirty miles, and travelling was much impeded, as it was necessary to skirt their borders. The city of Elie stood in the midst of one upwards of sixty miles in length, and was, like the ancient capital of Mexico, approached by three great dykes thrown across the marshes. The rich meadow-pastures which now surround the town were overflowed for months together; the cormorant and other sea-birds haunted the lintels of the abbey and the pre-

cipitous towers of the cathedral; and from the walls the eye embraced a vast expanse of water, dotted with green wooded islands, and traversed by the narrow lines of the causeways which led to the mainland. It was here, on this inland sea, that King Canute and his knights lay on their oars, and listened to the even-song of the monks.[1]

Around the chief towns, and throughout several counties in the immediate neighbourhood of the metropolis, the country was tolerably cultivated. It had been matter of complaint, however, that even under the most enterprising landowners the proportion of arable to pasture land was comparatively insignificant. It is impossible to ascertain the total amount of grain then produced in England; but from the extraordinary variations in the price of wheat which generally took place during the year, and from the frequency with which we find the poorer classes reduced to bread made of "peasen, vetches, and fern-roots," we may infer that the quantity raised was hardly adequate to meet the necessities of a not very dense population. For more than three hundred years these fluctuations are observable; but as centuries elapse, and cultivation extends, they become less continuous and extreme. In the year 1246 the price of the bushel of wheat was sixteen shillings; three years before it had been as low as two. During 1254 it sold in the Northampton market at one pound; in the Dunstaple at a fourth of that price. At Leicester, in the early part of March 1317, it was fifty-four shillings; four days later it fell to fourteen; during the harvest it reached eighty; a fortnight afterwards, when the crop had been collected, it was under six.[2]

[1] "Merie sungen the muneches binnen Elie,
The Cnut Ching rew there by;
Roweth, cnihtes, near the land,
And here we thes muneches saeng."

Harrison mentions the three causeways that led to Elie; the cormorant, he adds, was called the "night raven." "There is no cause wherefore I should describe the cormorant among hawks, of which some be black, and many pied, chiefly about the Isle of Elie, where they are taken for the night raven."

[2] *State of the Poor*, by Sir F. M. Eden, Bart., 1797. Appendix Table of Prices. *Local History of Chester* in the *Vale Royal*. It is necessary to remember, however, that an acre never produced more than twelve bushels of wheat or "one good load of hay." Of course, this difference in the rate of production must be taken into account when estimating the total extent of cultivation.

Dense masses of forest, immense breadths of moor and morass, narrow stripes of arable and considerable tracts of pasture ground—such was the aspect presented by England in the fifteenth century. The forests were stocked with the roe and the fallow, and the antlered red-deer, who has now retreated into the naked fastnesses of Athol or Braemar, then "haunted the fens of Doncaster, and the great meres thereabouts." Along the sluggish banks of the inland rivers colonies of industrious beavers had erected their lodges, "wherein," says an old naturalist, "their bodies lie drie above the river, although they so provide most commonly that their tails may hang within the same;" and no traveller could fail to notice "the fair warrens of conies," which met him wherever he went. Rabbits were then a valuable article of commerce, as the fur, especially the black, was in great repute for various articles of dress, and the production of "conies" had consequently become a recognised branch of trade. Among the fens, and upon the unenclosed commons, numerous birds which are now seldom or never met with in this country, then bred regularly, and remained throughout the year. Flocks of the great bustard haunted the downs; and from the meres, amid the cackling of an innumerable assemblage of the rarer wild-fowl, might be heard at times the boom of the bittern, or the trumpeted alarm of the wild swan. No human intruder disturbed their loneliness, save where the unfrequent cabin of a half-savage waterman nestled among the reeds, or the evening bell rang from the grey tower of an island monastery. For the missionary genius of the Church had penetrated these primitive seclusions, and men who shrank from the rough issues of common life, practised, upon the Marsh of Romney or among the Lincoln Washes, the perilous virtues of the cloister.[1]

All over Britain the monastic bodies had secured for themselves the goodly places of the land. The number of the monks was almost incredible. Even in particular districts, and attached to single houses, they were to be estimated not by tens or by

[1] *Description of England*, by W. Harrison—prefixed to Holinshed's Chronicle, 1574. Leland's *Itinerary*, 1538 (2d edition, Oxford, 1744). Ramsey Abbey was on an island in the Lincoln Washes, and the Franciscans had, in 1264, a convent on Romney Marsh.—*Mores Catholici*, iii. 260.

hundreds, but by thousands.[1] Such a drain upon the energies of an industrious population could ill be sustained, even under the most favourable circumstances; and when this immense army turned its arms against the society it had been instituted to protect, we need not wonder that the burden should have quickly become intolerable.

Yet it cannot be disputed that, amid much that was grotesque and much that was ignoble, the life of a cathedral city in these days was a life thoroughly artistic. The ecclesiastical artist understood perfectly what was wanted, and every effect was characteristic and impressive. The most minute detail had been anxiously studied, even down to the melancholy warning of the death-crier.[2] And what a scene it presents! Within the cathedral itself, among the noble forms of Catholic art, the august liturgy of the Catholic Church is being continually repeated. On the benches of the chapter-house, the policy of princes is freely canvassed by mitred ecclesiastics; in the adjacent cloister, the clergy solemnly exorcise a baron possessed by the devil; at the feet of a dirty devotee in rags the noblest damsel in the county seeks absolution on her knees; soldiers who have laid aside the sword, and statesmen who have "retired" from the world, find shelter within the gates of the sanctuary. Outside the monastic buildings, the scenes, though

[1] In the Monastery of St Finian, in Ireland, there were at one time 3000 monks; the Abbey of Bangor, near Carrickfergus, contained 4000; and Bangor, in Wales, was divided into eight compartments, to each of which 800 monks were assigned.—*Mores Catholici*, iii. 226. The "Ages of Faith" is a curious book, full of all manner of learning, Christian and Pagan, priestly and scholastic; there is power, too, of a rambling and discursive kind, and many of the descriptions of local scenery are admirably picturesque; but, on the whole, the book is painful, incomplete, illogical, and unsatisfactory.

[2] In a statute passed towards the end of the reign of Henry VIII., it is ordered "that clarks are to ring no more than the passing-bell for poare people, unless for an honest householder, and he a citizen; nor for children, maydes, journeymen, apprentices, day-labourers, or any other poare person." In 1662, the Bishop of Worcester asks, in his visitation charge:—"Doth the parish clerk or sexton take care to admonish the living, by tolling of a passing-bell, of any that are dying, thereby to meditate of their own deaths, and to commend the others weak condition to the mercy of God?"—*Annals of Worcester in the Olden Time*, 1849. Sir Walter Scott, in the *Border Minstrelsy* (ii. 33), asserts that the custom was still (1803) retained in many villages in Scotland.

still attesting the supreme authority of the Church, are not so artistically arranged. Pilgrims, swarming with vermin, swarm along the highways, filthy mendicants recount their filthy adventures at this or the other shrine, pardoners dispose of their stale charms cheaply to the nearest bidder. Crucified saints are stuck over the doorways of taverns, and emaciated Madonnas hang in stable windows. Still that vagrant populace is controlled by one common impulse, and the tangled mass of Gothic foliage which sweeps into the evening sky shelters a society which, throughout its intricate issues, is pledged to maintain the faith "once delivered to the saints."

Against the tyranny of this magnificent organisation, the English layman opposed his natural sense of independence, and the action of his municipal system. Excepting the haughtier Norman nobility, who, in the civil wars, had nearly exterminated each other, the gentry were commonly resident on their estates. Some of them occasionally proceeded to London for the transaction of public business; but the hardship of being sent there was considered so great—although the burgesses at least were *paid* for their attendance — that the Crown was frequently obliged to compel the shires and burghs to elect parliamentary representatives.[1] Impassable roads infested with highwaymen, wretched hostels infested with vermin, made it a matter of difficulty and peril to reach the metropolis from a distant county. Nor were natural obstacles considered sufficient to protect the provincial centres of trade; artificial restrictions were added. The bye-laws of the county courts and of the burgh magistrates were conceived in a peculiarly jealous and hostile spirit. The most common articles of consumption, as wheat and butter, could not be transmitted from one county to another, except in small quantities and by special licence. Numerous economic evils were no doubt produced by this rigorous surveillance — such, for instance, as the remarkable difference in the price of provisions which existed simultaneously in neighbouring markets—but, on the whole, it cannot well be questioned that the policy was dictated by sound and prudential considerations. It enabled, nay, indeed forced, each district of

[1] The burgh representatives were paid for their attendance on Parliament at the rate of two shillings a-day.—*Social History of the Southern Counties*, by George Roberts; a work containing much curious information.

the kingdom to preserve within itself the elements of an independent society. The position, too, in which the landlord stood to his tenant, had long before been greatly modified, and villenage, in its oppressive forms, had been converted into a more humane and honourable relation. "Let no man, for the future," said a statute of the twelfth century,[1] "presume to carry on the wicked trade of selling men in market, like brute beasts, which hitherto hath been the common custom in England:" and from that time forward gradual modifications of the common law had secured the emancipation of the serf. To the working classes themselves, especially to those engaged in commerce, the existence of the local guilds and of the great trading societies supplied, besides, an obvious basis of co-operation and defence. The effect of a system which concentrates in the capital the minute machinery of government is invariably to weaken and enervate the national life; but, fortunately, the discharge of local duties, and the exercise of local government, had made the English civilian, the yeoman as well as the gentleman, tenacious of his rights and jealous of his liberties.

We cannot now form any very definite notion of the material comfort of the general population. The houses, we are aware, were built of wood; for although bricks were known in the reign of Henry VI., they were little used until the beginning of the next century. The cottages of the working classes (a few planks nailed together, and plastered over with mud to keep out the cold), were, of course, the most imperfect in construction; but, except in point of size, the residences of the county magnates would not have gained much by comparison. A pallet stuffed with straw, and a "good round log for a pillow," formed the usual couch of not a few who were certainly classed among the gentry. "Lattices, and fine rifts of oak, in checker-wise," supplied the place of glass, which was then only used for church windows. Even in 1567 it continued so rare and expensive a luxury, that stringent precautions were taken for its preservation. "It were good," says the steward, in his report on Alnwick Castle, "that the whole lights of every windowe, at the departure of his lordship, and during the time of his lordship's absence, *were taken downe and laid up in safety*, until, on his return, they be set up

[1] 1102. 3 Henry I.

anew." Chimneys were little used, and the dense smoke of the wood or peat fire was allowed to escape as it best could. The people were, on the whole, well fed; rye and barley bread, bacon, cider, and beer, and upon the sea-coast, herrings, forming their usual fare. A plain hospitality was at that time the fashion, but the rich soon became more fastidious, so much so, that, in the succeeding reign, "the cookes of the nobility were for the most part musical-headed Frenchmen and strangers." The people throve upon their homely fare, and do not appear to have been much afflicted by any general distemper until the end of the century, when the sweating-sickness broke out, and, with the plague, lasted almost uninterruptedly for one hundred and fifty years. "Early to bed, early to rise," was the universal maxim, and our forefathers had breakfasted and begun the work of the day at an hour when we are leaving the assembly or the supper-party. The wages of agricultural labourers were generally regulated by statute, and had been steadily increased from ten shillings, which was about the highest rate fixed in 1388, to upwards of one pound per annum, the maximum in 1490. But it was in the style of dress that the contrast between the rich and the poor was offensively marked. The Normans delighted in a rich and elaborate toilet, while they compelled the commonalty to retain the simple style dictated by primitive habits. Many sumptuary laws were passed for this express purpose, and the 22d Edward IV., cap. 1, for instance, enacted that only "gentlemen" should wear "pikes" to their shoes, boots more than eleven inches in length, or commit any other fashionable absurdity then current.[1] These details might be indefinitely multiplied; but one scene of which accurate record has been kept—the picture of a provincial capital in its holiday dress—will make them more living than any general description can do.

It is a bright morning in the month of May,—such as May mornings used to be in the old time, before the east wind was invented,—and there is a goodly prospect from the Abbey walls. Great masses of greenwood stretch across the wide

[1] Eden's *State of the Poor*, chap. i. and Appendix. Harrison's *Description*. Lelands' *Itinerary*. *Northumberland House Book*, xvii. An. 1567. *Dress and Habits of the People of England*, by Joseph Strutt, 1799. *Costume in England*, by F. W. Fairholt, F.S.A., 1846.

fertile plain, through which the Dee makes its way sluggishly to the sea. On all hands rise—suggestive of supremacy, if not of rapine—the fortified castles of the great northern nobles. Far in the west the stronghold of the "warden of the Marches," among whose inaccessible turrets the golden eagle has its eyrie,[1] crowns the green and wooded precipices of Beeston. The Welsh mountains, wrapt in their veil of blue morning mist, line the southern horizon, and on the other side the surf of the Irish Sea breaks whitely along the desolate sands of the Wirrol, and the low-lying thinly peopled marshes of the mainland.

In the fifteenth century extensive tracts of country, which are now reclaimed and cultivated, lay within the sea-margin, and a wide expanse of blue water must have been distinctly visible from the walls of the ancient Cestrense. The city, which, by the retreat of the tide, has been left stranded in the interior, was at one time literally a seaport. "Great stores of shippes," we know, arrived at it by the Dee, when it had become the most important town on the western frontier; and before that period the salt water perhaps washed its walls. During the reign of Edward III. at least, the Abbot of Chester claimed *wrecum maris*, the wrecks cast by storms upon his lands of Chevely and Huntingdon—lands which are now many miles distant from the tideway. The Wirrol, which skirted the northern margin of the estuary, was a wild and desolate region, not yet "disforested," and inhabited by a few savage and ferocious outlaws. The nature of their pursuits is vividly set forth by the frequent entries in the local histories, which relate to the "pirates of the Worral;" and the terror which this wild and plundering race inspired probably accounts for Leland's anxiety, fifty years afterwards, to avoid the inhospitable locality. Even towards the close of Elizabeth's reign their social condition does not seem to have improved, and as late as 1585 we find "sixteen pirates executed for taking a ship out of the Worrol." This desolate wilderness approached to within a few miles of the town, from which it was separated by the waters of the Mersey, whose present channel was originally clothed with an ancient forest of oak,

[1] Harrison (p. 225), says that the eagle built on a castle near Chester.

scarcely more impenetrable, however, than the dense thicket of masts which lines the wharfs of the modern Liverpool.[1]

The city itself had witnessed many of the fluctuations of fortune. Its position as a frontier stronghold always made it important. Before the Conquest it was the scene of perpetual conflicts between the Cymry and the Saxons. The dictatorial power conferred by William on the Constable of Chester was justified by the unsettled habits and the incessant hostility of his Welsh neighbours, who, even by Edward I., were little more than nominally subdued. Since that time it had formed the usual rendezvous for troops, whenever an expedition was meditated against the Scotch or Welsh border; and during the bloody conflict which the death of Richard terminated, as its authorities arrayed themselves on either side, the rival houses were alternately dominant in the city. These circumstances of strife and danger had sensibly impressed their characters upon its face; and its skilful position on a curve of the river, its fortified castle, its massive ramparts, spoke of a garrison dangerously exposed, frequently assailed, continually on the alert. It is interesting to know that the curious terrace, with the arched arcade, which rises on either side of the street—"a singular praise or property to this city," as an old Chester-man has it, and which renders its thoroughfares as picturesque to the modern traveller as those of Berne or Bologna—was originally erected to enable the inhabitants on more equal terms to defend their town against the rapid falcon-like swoop of the daring horsemen of the Border.

Around the Abbey church, and along the northern and eastern walls, stretched the long lines of the conventual buildings, which then occupied more than a fourth of the whole town. The original abbey was of great antiquity, having been founded, it was said, in 666, by Walperius, King of the Mercians, for his fair and devout daughter St Werburg, from whom it derived its name. The corroded, copper-coloured, time-

[1] *Memoir of the Rapid and Extensive Changes that have taken place at the Entrance to the River Mersey*, by Jos. Brookes Yates, Phil. Soc. Liverpool, 1843. Mortimer's *History of Wirrol*, 1847. "Lyrpole *alias* Lyverpole," says Leland, "a pavid towne, hath but a chapel. At Lyrpole is small custume payid that causeth marchantes to resort." —*Itinerary*, vol. vii.

stained edifice with which we are acquainted, was then being erected. Edward I. had granted the monks "venison" from his forests of Delamere and Wirrol to assist them in rebuilding their church, abbot after abbot had striven for two hundred years to bring the good work to a close, and the present occupant of the chair, Simon Ripley, had undertaken the nave, the southern transept, and the central tower. The massive and gloomy pile, however, still remained unfinished, and the Reformation prevented the completion of the great cross of the cathedral according to the original design. Beyond the high wall which fronted the north side of the building lay the North-Gate, a spacious piazza, where the booths of the merchants who attended the Abbots' Fair were periodically established. Thatched with reeds, which the monks were empowered by charter to gather from Stanlaw Marsh, and of the very slightest architectural construction, these stalls contained every necessary, and almost every luxury, of that primitive life; and the itinerant trader, who wandered from fair to fair, often carried in his leathern wallet what would have been reckoned a fortune by any baron in England. The booths, however, have been cleared away this May morning, and a motley multitude—friars, pardoners, belted nobles, honest rustics, wild-looking scamps from the marshes of the Wirrol and the Welsh border—wait eagerly the approach of the pageant. The whole town indeed is crowded with visitors. Some have come to meet their friends; others to purchase food and raiment, armour or weapons, whatever they may require during the next twelve months; others, of a more devout turn, to avail themselves of the "one thousand days of pardon," granted by Clement, Bishop of Rome (not to mention the additional month guaranteed by the "Bushop of Chester") to whoever should resort "in peaceable manner with good devotion to heare and see the sayd playes from tyme to tyme," —an effective and characteristic mode of soliciting public support. Along the broad wall where we are seated the monks themselves are arrayed,—stout, ruddy, hale, and honest gentlemen, if one may judge of them by their looks. Which, perhaps, it may be as prudent not to do; for I find, in a collection of old trials, that of "dyvers wymen," who, during the previous summer, had been indicted and condemned as "paramours of

the monks of Chester,"—a creditable proceeding in itself, perhaps, but which looks to us now just a little like punishing the wrong parties.[1]

The Whitson Plays were acted at Chester, seven or eight on each day, during the Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday of the Whitsuntide week, by the various crafts in the city, to each of whom a separate mystery was allotted. The drapers, for instance, exhibited the Fall of Lucifer; the water-carriers of the Dee reproduced the Deluge; the cooks had the Harrowing of Hell. The performers were carried from one station to another by means of a movable scaffold, a huge and ponderous machine, mounted on wheels, gaily decorated with flags, and divided into two compartments, the upper of which formed the stage, and the lower, defended from vulgar curiosity by coarse canvas draperies, answered the purposes of the green-room. The performers began at the Abbey gates, where they were witnessed by the dignitaries of the Church; they then proceeded to the High Cross, where the mayor and the civic magnates were assembled; and so on throughout the city, until this motley history of God and His dealings with man had been played out.

The production of these pageants must have been attended with considerable outlay; "to all the city," says the old proclamation, "follows labour and cost." Probably the expense of each Mystery was not less than fifteen or twenty pounds, estimated according to the present value of money. The dresses had been originally obtained from the churches, but the practice seems to have occasioned much scandal among the stricter clergy (William of Wykeham, Bishop of Winchester in 1384, denounced the priests who were in the habit of lending holy vestments for this purpose as guilty of sacrilege); and the guilds had been latterly obliged to provide the dresses as well as the other properties for themselves. The old registers of the trading companies contain many entries relating to these expenses, some of which are curious, and many not a little profane. Our Lord was commonly represented wearing a gilt peruke and

[1] Webb's *Description*, 1620. Archdeacon Rogers, 1581. King's *Vale Royal*, 1656. *The Life of the Glorious Virgin St Werburg*, London, 1521. Ormerod's *Cheshire*, 3 vols., 1819; the most magnificent of the local histories. *Royal Visits and Progresses to Wales*, &c., by Ed. Parry, 2d edition, 1851.

a sheepskin coat, which was either painted or brilliantly illuminated. Lucifer appeared in his traditional costume, horns and a tail, cloven feet and a red beard; and the item, "Payd to Wattis for dressing the devil's head," seems to indicate that an educated *artiste* was specially engaged to perform this delicate and responsible duty. The close connection between Judas Iscariot and the evil principle was typified, moreover, by *his* red hair, against which colour the illiterate in these days entertained a decided antipathy. Besides the expenditure on dress, the players had to be remunerated for their attendance at the rehearsals as well as at the public performance. The pageant accounts contain many entries which relate to this subject:—"*Payd to the players for rehearsal — Imprimis, to God,* iis. viiid.; *itm. to Pilate his wife,* iis.; *itm. to the Devil and Judas,* is. vid."—only eighteenpence between them, as it was probably considered inexpedient to incur much outlay on such disreputable characters. There was, indeed, a regularly graduated scale of remuneration; so that while Herod and Pilate fared sumptuously every day, the cock that crew when Peter denied his Lord starved on a miserable groat—"*Payd to Fauston for coc-croying,* iiijd." This Fauston seems to have had a kind of available talent, for we subsequently meet him engaged in a different department of the drama—"*Payd to Fauston for hanging Judas,* vd." Nor were scenic effects altogether neglected. There was the cherry-tree that blossomed and bore fruit at Mary's desire, and the elder-bush on which Judas hanged himself. "The cross, with a rope to draw it up," and "two pair of gallows," are prominent items in the old accounts. But it was on "hell-mouthe" that the stage artist lavished his resources, and that he depended for his principal points. "*Payd for mending of hell,* ijd.; *itm. for painting of hell-mouth,* iijd.; *itm. for making of hell-mouthe new,* is. ixd.; *itm. for keeping fire at hell's-mouth,* iiijd.; *itm. for setting the world of fyer,* vd. (this last was another of Fauston's performances), are entries which occur upon every page. "Hell-mouthe," according to the old authorities, and as it is pictured in the early engravings, represented the head of a devouring dragon, whose red eyeballs glared fiercely on the spectators, and whose open jaws disclosed a murky cavern, wherein were stationed "a great company of devils," and from which issued the despairing groans of the

tormented.[1] We have got very far away from these old monkish fictions, and the medieval "hell-mouthe" has grown strange and incredible. It had its drawbacks, no doubt; still, on the whole, it was useful, if not ornamental; and one sometimes wonders what we are to put in its place.

[1] Sharp's *Dissertation on the Coventry Mysteries*, 1825. *Illustrations of the Manners and Expenses of Ancient Times in England*, 1797.

THE MARQUIS OF MONTROSE.

NEITHER Cameronian, nor Covenanter, nor Puritan,—to these classes the "Scottish Worthies" are supposed exclusively to belong,—"James Graeme, sometime Marquis of Montrose," was yet a brave gentleman and a Christian soldier. His enemies (and he has had many, for he clung to a falling house) asserted that he was cruel, and a lover of innocent blood,—a baser falsehood was never coined, even in the mint of ecclesiastical calumny. His friends describe the courteous gentleman, the polished scholar, the graceful poet. These he was, no doubt; but he was much more. In war, the critics of the last century or two have called him rash, impetuous, and fortunate in spite of prudence,—as has been said more recently of one in whose veins the same blood flowed. The misunderstanding is quite as profound of James Graeme as of Charles Napier. Both were thorough captains, who calculated every hazard of the game before they moved a piece. But once begun, then no doubt there was what may be nicknamed rashness, impetuosity; the impetuosity without which victory, however well planned, cannot be secured; the rashness which is the last result of consummate prudence. But Montrose was more than a soldier. To us, at least, he has always appeared one of the most complete, well-balanced, and far-seeing statesmen of his age,—with the exception of Cromwell, the only great practical man the rebellion-struggle gave birth to.

Mr Mark Napier has tried to vindicate Montrose, and we

owe him thanks accordingly. His instincts are right, as is his industry. If he fails, it is not from lack of zeal. Unfortunately he does not possess the pictorial faculty. Unless the historian can give life to the past, why, let the dead past bury its dead. A writer may accumulate endless details, and yet never flash one ray of light upon the environment of the stage, or the motives of the actors. In the multitude of cooks there is confusion; in the multitude of details there is darkness. Mr Napier is industrious, but he never brings Montrose in a lifelike way before our eyes. He discourses sententiously of splendid virtues; but he does not show us them in action. He assures us that Montrose was a great man, and that he achieved great deeds; but how he was a great man, and how his greatness worked itself out in that particular form, through that sad and noble life, he does not anywhere show us. His big words are not characteristic. The elegant apparition which he raises is not a being of flesh and blood. We do not come into contact with the man, but with monarchical principles and lace ruffles.

Who, for instance, with any insight into the heart—and without this insight no writer can expect to explain his living contemporaries, much less his ancestors who have returned to dust,—could gravely argue, that Montrose's "Address to his Mistress" contained, in the form of a speech to his sovereign, his political confession of faith? The hypothesis is absurd and uncritical. It is absurd to suppose that Montrose could abuse his king,—"*Thou* traitorous and untrue;" and it is uncritical to imagine that these hearty and genuine love-verses could be meant, under any circumstances, to indicate a man's political preferences.

"He either fears his fate too much,
Or his deserts are small,
That puts it not unto the touch
To win or lose it all.

"The golden laws of love shall be
Upon this pillar hung,
A simple heart,—a single eye,—
A true and constant tongue,—
Let no man for more love pretend
Than he has hearts in store,—
True love begun can never end;
Love one, and love no more."

These verses would lose to us all their simplicity and authentic sweetness, were we forced to believe that they veiled a political parable. The virtue would depart out of them. They would become false, artificial, and rhetorical,—an ingenious exercise of the intellect, not the expression of the heart. But because they are sweet and simple, we hold that they are what they profess to be. Montrose, during his short life, his biographer adds, had no time to dangle about women. He married "Mistress Magdalene Carnegie" when he was a lad; and it is not known that he engaged in a single intrigue. The argument is somewhat questionable. As he was free from impurity, he could not write one of the purest poems in the language! No doubt there are in his verses many ambiguous and somewhat fantastic expressions. Probably in a modern love-poem we might not talk of "synods," "committees," and so forth; but Montrose's age was euphuistic, and all that can be legitimately inferred from their use is, that his poetry did not quite escape the taint.

Mr Napier apologises for Montrose's early adhesion to the Covenant. No apology was needed. The fact is, on the contrary, we think, strikingly characteristic of the habitual honesty and moderation of his character. He is clearly one of those staid, clear-headed, unmanageable men who do what they consider their duty at all hazards. A moderate man; a man well-balanced and sagacious; not by any means a fit tool for the zealots of either party. Most of his brother royalists are royalists by instinct and tradition. They throw themselves with blind fidelity into the gulf. Charles is their divinely commissioned master; were he cruel as Herod, and faithless as Nero, they would sacrifice themselves with equal alacrity. But Montrose is an independent thinker who judges for himself. His king, his countrymen, his friends may look hardly upon him; but with sword and pen and the blessing of heaven he will succour the righteous policy. The national faith has been attacked, and the national faith, which his conscience approves, must be defended. So he subscribes the first Covenant, and leads the Covenanting army against the Northern Prelatists. But he will as little surrender his honest convictions, his intellectual freedom, the moral breadth of his nature, to the priest as to the king. For he is constitutionally tolerant; he is really attached to the wise liberty for which he fights; and he ad-

heres to his traditions with the habitual tenacity and seriousness of his character. Even when in their ranks the Presbyterian Inquisitors find him in this respect "very sair to be guided." And as soon as the suspicion crosses his mind that Argyle and the Confederates are playing the king false, that political change and not religious freedom is their aim, he quits them at once and finally.

For it was no accident that made Montrose a royalist. His nature was essentially conservative. His classical culture, his serene and somewhat antique cast of character, the habitual sobriety of his opinions, separated him from men who were driven by an imperious passion, who obeyed irregular and visionary impulses, who raked up with inflexible harshness the embers of civil strife. His conscience was sensitive; the old landmarks were sacred in his eyes; his meditative intellect was adverse to change. Had the cause of the Parliament been clearly and obviously righteous, it is possible that he might have risen above his creed, and disengaged himself from its restraints. But he had no such persuasion. The struggle, as he viewed it, was a struggle between the national king and an ambitious soldiery, who would ultimately enslave the state; and he was not stirred by the hysteric passion, which was curiously blended in the character of Cromwell with wary coolness and common-sense, and which alternately found expression in riotous irony and fervent prayer.

And Montrose recognised earlier and more clearly than most of his contemporaries the malign nature of the struggle on which the monarchy had embarked. He detected the utterly hostile nature of the elements that at length, after a century of compromise, had come into direct collision; and from the first he felt, with the Carthaginian, that it was an Inexpiable War. Among all the soldiers and statesmen who then fought and intrigued, he was the only man, except one, and that one more profound and politic perhaps, but less transparently honest and truthful than himself, who distinctly comprehended the fatal issues involved. While the king hesitated and procrastinated, while his advisers recommended compromise and delay, Montrose, like Cromwell, went straight to the mark. His advice to Charles never varied. "Hold no terms with the rebels. Either you or they must go down. A truce, a compromise, is impracticable; not to be desired if it were practicable." We

think in this light the most interesting letter the Marquis ever wrote is that indited from "Inverlochy in Lochaber," immediately after he had beaten Argyle. Amid the debris of battle, and on the bleak shores of the ensanguined lake, he dictates a state paper to the king. Hot from fight, and flushed with victory, he reasons as a statesman might reason in his cabinet. Rumours have reached him that Charles is in treaty with the rebels; but he cannot believe that the report is true. "Your majesty may remember," he continues, "how much you said you were convinced I was in the right in my opinion of them. The more your majesty grants, the more will be asked, and I have too much reason to know that they will not rest satisfied with less than making your majesty a king of straw." True and striking words! The political sagacity and the statesmanlike discernment of the man were certainly quite as noteworthy as his genius for war, and it was morally impossible for such a man to remain in the army of the Covenant after a certain period of the struggle.

The Marquis, when he raised the royal standard among the braes of Athol, was in the prime of life—thirty or thirty-three years of age—and, to judge from the many sketches of him that remain, no unworthy representative of the handsome house to which he belonged. Not largely made, but graceful and compact; his grey eye piercing and brilliant; his long light chestnut hair, worn in the negligent cavalier fashion of the time; his nose somewhat high, but firm and aquiline, "like the ancient sign of the magnanimity of the Persian kings," as his chaplain will have it. His enemies asserted that he was "stately to affectation;" but though constitutionally grave and reserved, and of a stainless purity of life, his address is commended by those who knew him best, for its winning and woman-like charm. A still, courteous, self-reliant, sweet-tempered man; yet hard and tense as steel. Such men may sometimes be met with even yet,—men who encounter good and evil fortune with the same grave serenity; who are never rude, or loud-spoken, or insolent; but whose grip is vice-like and tenacious, and who adhere to their convictions, as was said of the Scottish Jacobites by their exiled king, with constant and singular fidelity. And it is this strenuous yet undemonstrative character which not unfrequently secures the most passionate devotion, the most implicit obedience. Over all classes Montrose at least

exercised a special fascination. The savage "red-shank" loved with a fervour that has rarely been rivalled the light, wiry general, who could wade a torrent, or scale a mountain pass in the dead of winter, or win a battle against desperate odds, with the same confident ease. Nor could learned and politic men—Spottiswoode, De Retz Parisian courtier and cardinal, Poet Drummond of Hawthornden—escape the charm. Spottiswoode laid aside his law books and his presidential gown, followed him to the field, preceded him to the scaffold, left his children a precious legacy to his charge. The Cardinal, who had known some tolerably distinguished soldiers in his time, pronounced Graeme to be "the only man who has ever realised to me the idea of certain ancient heroes;" and Hawthornden welcomed in his friend's career "the return of the Golden Age."

It is difficult to keep pace with Montrose through that brief and brilliant campaign,—his marches are so swift and silent, his victories so rapid and dazzling. He has vowed to bring Scotland back to the king, and he begins the enterprise with a single follower. Beset on every side, he turns, and doubles, and beats back, and then, when least looked for, falls on his prey with a hawk-like swoop. He routs the puffy burghers of Perth at Tippermuir; a day or two thereafter he enters the good town of Aberdeen; then, having enticed Argyle to the Spey, he plunges amid the wilds of Badenoch into outer darkness, as Mr Carlyle would say. He is gaining time,—time to marshal the forces of the royalists who are everywhere scattered and disheartened, and to make victory, though marvellous, not a miracle. So he reappears in Athol; reappears in Aberdeen; seats himself with consummate skill and coolness among the woods of Fyvie where the Covenanting armies surge against him in vain. But the Gordons are sulky and will not rise; it is hopeless to wait longer in Buchan; so shaking his unwieldy enemy easily off, he once more, in the dead of winter, startles with the tread of armed men the eyries of Badenoch, and the barren wilderness of the Spey.

That autumn and winter were certainly not propitious to the Puritans. At no time was there greater need for the prayer which Principal Baillie put up, that "the Almighty might be pleased to *blink* in mercy upon Scotland." What between the papistical Highlanders of "James Graeme, sometime Marquis of Montrose," and the great storm of snow which then covered

the country, the members of the northern Presbyteries are sorely beset. But worse fortune is in store for their leaders. Argyle, much perplexed in mind by the unaccountable eccentricities of this Will-o'-the-wisp enemy, is on his way to Perth, when he learns that his rival is at his back. Seized with sudden panic, he disbands his army, and makes for the metropolis. Even there he does not feel that he is safe; so he renders up his commission to the rebel government and flies to his inaccessible stronghold on Loch Fyne. "It's a far cry to Lochow;" and Gillespie Grumach may at length breathe freely; for his antagonist, wiry and virulent though he be, cannot follow him here. But he does not know his man. Montrose is inexorable: through the wildest passes in the bleak December storms—and it is a bitter winter—he forces his way; and on the hillsides above his own castle Argyle again beholds the watch-fires of his foe. Craven always, and now utterly unnerved, he flies shamefully, and leaves the ruthless hunter to harry his lair.

Having sacked the country of the Campbells, Montrose plunges into Lochaber, and prepares to winter upon the desolate shores of Loch Ness. This is the critical moment, the turning-point in the campaign. He is deserted by a large proportion of his men, and on all sides surrounded by the enemy. Seaforth is in the north at Inverness; Baillie at Perth; Argyle, recovering from his panic, raises his clan, and writes to his friends in Edinburgh that he has "overtook the rogues at Lochaber." A daring blow is required. Montrose doubles back; leads his men right across the precipitous spurs of Ben Nevis; and, with startling suddenness, closes in on Macallum More and his men, who are camped round their castle of Inverlochy on the shore of Loch Eil. Argyle again, like a hunted stag, takes to the water, but he cannot take his army with him; and Auchinleck, "a stout soldier, but a very vicious man," as his Covenanting allies describe him, is left in command. The winter morning dawns, still, clear, and frosty; the Campbells can hear distinctly the flourish of trumpets that salutes the royal standard on the mountain, and the wild war-tune of the Camerons as they quit their cover, "Come to me, and I will give you flesh;"—a fierce challenge that day amply redeemed. It was a splendid charge—a handful upon a host; it must have

come back, one may guess, on Charles Napier's memory, the morning of Meeanee.

Inverlochy was the most terribly complete of Montrose's victories,—the Campbells being literally driven into the sea,—and its effect was instantaneous. The prestige of Argyle is destroyed. The Gordon cavalry, headed by the noblest gentleman of their race, join the royal standard. The army of the northern rebels melts away in a night. Montrose marches through Aberdeenshire and Moray into the Mearns without seeing a foe. Neither Baillie nor Hurry will fight, and the Graeme with masterly rapidity pushes past them to sack Dundee, from which town he effects a still more rapid and masterly retreat upon Glen Esk. The hills form a citadel where he knows that he is safe. These sterile regions are his arsenals. The Lowland cavalry dare not follow him through the passes. Thenceforward for weeks and months he becomes obscure, impalpable, veiled in darkness, a sort of terrible myth. Rumours may reach the Covenanting generals from Athol, from Loch Katrine, from Ben Lomond; not to be relied on, however, for the Puritan spies are baffled and at fault. So Hurry marches towards Inverness to join the northmen, who are again in the field; but Montrose is forthwith upon his trail, and at Alderne, in a stiff and well-contested fight, the veteran army perishes. Baillie, advancing cautiously along the southern bank of the Spey, keeps the royal force in sight for several days, till the Marquis again eludes him, and the scent is lost amid the woods of Abernethy. At length at Alford, in Strathedon, the two generals finally encounter; and although young Lord Gordon is slain,—a heavy and distressful blow,—Baillie is utterly routed. Of all the Covenanting armies only one now remains to be dealt with; and among the thickets of Kilsyth, Montrose wins his last, perhaps his most memorable victory. He has fulfilled his promise. From Inverness to the Border the royal authority is re-established,—he has brought Scotland back to the king.

To do what Montrose did, to win successive victories over seven or eight trained armies, each of them superior in numbers, discipline, and organisation to that which he led, must be counted no small achievement; but the peculiar difficulty which he had to meet, and which none but a really great man could have met with success, resulted from the peculiar consti-

tution of his own army. The Highlander was brave, and he liked fighting. But he liked plunder better, and he liked to secure his plunder. So that the general was placed in a singular dilemma. Whenever he gained a battle, he lost his army. The victor, in the hour of victory, was left at the mercy of the vanquished. It is assuredly not the least remarkable fact in his career, that he contrived to secure permanent and enduring results; in effect, to subdue and pacify the whole of Scotland; with an army that continually melted away, and to which victory was, in truth, more fatal than defeat. Any energetic Celtic robber could issue from the passes, harry the plain, reive the black cattle of his Lowland neighbours, and then retire swiftly with the spoil into his mountain lair. He could do this; it was all that he could do. Montrose, through the felicity and daring of his genius, contrived to make these fickle and inconstant instruments work out a great scheme of national liberation. For though the body dissolved like the snow, the spirit, the *man*, remained,—a man who acted as a magnet, who drew soldiers out of every valley through which he passed, at whose war-cry the red-shanks gathered together from their remotest hills. Such a man was a nucleus, a centre, a rallying-point; and so long as their dreaded enemy lived, the rebel government felt that its supremacy in Scotland was not secure.

When, on his way to England, he is at last worsted, forced to quit his own country, and take refuge at a foreign court, he is not cast down nor depressed. He is still fertile in expedients; still prompt, resolute, and hopeful; still gentle, true, and of a good conscience. The elastic vigour of his mind is as noticeable in adversity as in victory. Charles's death indeed stung him very sorely; he felt it keenly; perhaps he was never quite the old man after it; probably it prompted that wild descent from the Orkneys, when he came back with the king's standard in black, and *nil medium* upon his own.

One sometimes wishes that Montrose had died in battle—in victory—wrapt, it may be, in the flag he had kept so bravely. But it was better not. A stormy death on the battle-field was fitter for Dundee. We have said that Montrose's was a well-balanced character; his life also was well-balanced. But it needed the last scene to perfect it. The death gives it a beau-

tiful lyric completeness which most lives, however distinguished in their incidents, want. It is a noble poem from beginning to end; breaking into a solemn dirge and wail of funeral music at the close.

That which enables the martyr to endure is the consciousness that each indignity of his martyrdom represents a great principle. And so widely has this been felt by men and women, so nobly in consequence have they been able to bear, that the degrading instruments of torture and death have escaped from the executioner's hand. They have ceased to be the instruments of infamy; and have become the symbols of heroic constancy and deathless honour. Christendom bows humbly before the Cross. The crown of thorns has become a crown of light. No martyr ever met a meaner death more nobly than Montrose. He saw with wonderful clearness the dignity of the indignities that were heaped upon him. The halter, the scaffold, the dismembered limb, had each its noble side, on which it represented honour, loyalty, and unspotted faith. It is easy to write thus now: but it was thus, undoubtedly, that Montrose saw them,—spontaneously, not by resolute effort of the will. The neat reflections, the epigrammatic sayings, which seem to critical men and artists (who pause over the scene fastidiously and at their leisure) best to befit the solemnity, remain on well-authenticated testimony as those which, in these forlorn hours, naturally occurred to his mind. "I think it," he exclaims, "a greater honour to have my head standing on the post of this town for this cause, than to have my picture in the king's bedchamber. I am beholden to you," he adds, referring to the terms of his sentence, "that lest my loyalty should be forgotten, ye have appointed five of your most eminent towns to bear witness of it to posterity." Again, as they are tying his hands, "I felt not more honoured," he says, with perfect simplicity, "when his Majesty sent me the Garter." Montrose was a true poet; the poetic form being used instinctively by him in moments of strong emotion; and these his last verses were dictated by the same spontaneous feeling:—

> "Let them bestow on every airth a limb,
> Then open all my veins, that I may swim
> To Thee, my Maker, in that crimson lake,—
> Then place my parboil'd head upon a stake,

Scatter my ashes—strew them in the air ;—
Lord ! since thou know'st where all these atoms are,
I'm hopeful thou'lt recover once my dust,
And confident thou'lt raise me with the just !"

But in his demeanour there is no rudeness or bravado,—only grave courtesy and polished irony,—the sole weapons his enemies have left him. The greatest of saints, he blandly assures them, have their own peculiar weaknesses. When they apologise for the extremities to which their brethren have proceeded in England, he answers only, "Error is infinite,"—a reply involving endless philosophies as well as subtlest sarcasm. Nay, he can even afford to jest with them, courtly and stately jesting as becomes the Marquis. For whatever happens, this at least is evident, that he will not allow these men to *close* with him; they are to be held at arm's length; they are to be kept away from the inner chambers of his soul. So he continues to converse with them, seasoning his discourse with quaint allusion and Latin apophthegm,—"very handsomely," as they admit; yet somewhat "too airy and volage," grave-visaged Patrick Simson thinks, for the occasion.

When at length his doom was read to him in the crowded house, "he lifted up his face without any word speaking." *He lifted up his face.* A grand speech,—eloquent in its solemn simplicity. A silent protest: a silent appeal. Was it with him as with an older martyr?

"And *looking upward*, full of grace,
He prayed, and from a happy place,
God's glory smote him on the face."

So died James Graeme, sometime Marquis of Montrose. He went through "the trying scene," his biographer assures us, "with the grace and gallantry of a perfect gentleman,"—as if he had engaged to dance a minuet with one of her Majesty's maids of honour, and did it, though he felt the duty rather irksome. Fancy a man entering the next world "with the grace and gallantry of a perfect gentleman." And yet, though the expression is somewhat unhappy when applied to the grave serenity of Montrose, it does not inaptly describe the way in which men died in those times. They prided themselves on doing it with perfect correctness and good breeding.

Their lace ruffles stiff with starch; their long locks elaborately curled; and the neat little speech, with its not over-hackneyed quotation from Horace or Catullus, to wind up with. Sir Thomas More set the fashion; it was kept up by all his successors during the reigns of Mary and Elizabeth; one of the last and most perfect specimens of an art that has died out is the speech of the Lord Grey of Wilton, who was tried with Raleigh in 1603. When asked if he had anything to say why death should not be pronounced, these only were his words:—"I have nothing to say;" there he paused long; "and yet a word of Tacitus comes in my mind,—'non eadem omnibus decora;' the house of the Wiltons have spent many lives in their prince's service, and Grey cannot beg his. God send the king a long and prosperous reign, and to your Lordships all honour." Neat and curt as an epigram, and surviving as such to the present day, while more words have been spent vainly,—a warning to Parliamentary orators.

But Graeme's is unique. "He lifted up his face without any word speaking."

CLAVERHOUSE.

MANY portraits of John Graham of Claverhouse have been preserved, and no physiognomist can study these portraits—more especially the Leven portrait by Sir Peter—beautiful and scornful as Antinous—without suspecting that there was something greater in him than was manifested in his life. His life for the most part was uneventful; only at the close was he brought face to face with a great crisis. How did he bear himself in the day of trial? I think we have sufficient evidence to satisfy us that in circumstances of peculiar difficulty he displayed surprising ability, sagacity, and aptitude for the conduct of great affairs.

His life, hitherto, had been tame. He had done the work assigned to him in a plain, sensible, matter-of-fact way, striving to do it thoroughly, and to make an end of it as quickly as possible. It never seems to have occurred to him that, in his dealings with the West Country Whigs, he was making for himself an evil name; that to future generations this military chief, executing without fear, or favour, or passion, the office committed to him by government, would be represented as a devil upon earth,—cruel, violent, rapacious, a lover of innocent blood. I do not think that he exceeded his commission, and the traditions of pitiless severity rest upon no historical basis. We know, on the contrary, that, when in command at Dundee, his government was mild and beneficent. He abolished the punishment of death for petty thefts,—a wonderfully enlightened measure for the age, and one which could never have

occurred to a man of the temperament ascribed by his defamers to Dundee. The truth is, that his character has been painted by the zealots whom he tried to crush; and pedlars and divines, the passion of the mob, and the animosity of the Church, have begotten between them a monstrous caricature. Even his domestic virtues—his temperance and his chastity—have been used to his disadvantage. One of his libellers complains that he was neither a debauchee nor a drunkard; his insatiate thirst for the blood of the saints leaving him no time to cultivate the milder vices.

He waited long; but his opportunity at last arrived. The Revolution of 1688 took place.

Loyalty with Dundee could hardly be called a passion. It was rather an ineradicable instinct which prevented him from seeing for a moment that any road, other than that which lay by the throne, was open to him. "It is not in the power of love or any other folly," he had said long before, "to alter my loyalty." And when the hour of trial came, he never halted nor faltered. The King was the King—that was the end of the whole matter. He stayed with James to the last; and when in a stupid panic and bewilderment the Prince left his kingdom, Dundee immediately hurried down to Scotland, bearing with him the royal commission appointing him Commander-in-Chief of the royal forces in the North.

But he was not a blind nor ignorant partisan. Many letters, written by him when a fugitive in the Highlands, have been preserved. Macaulay has said that Claverhouse spelt like a washerwoman. But these letters alone would suffice to prove that, if he spelt like a washerwoman, he reasoned like a statesman; the fact which chiefly concerns us. The truth is, however, that he spelt neither better nor worse—rather better, perhaps, upon the whole—than the majority of his noble contemporaries; and his style is excellent,—terse, luminous, directly and admirably to the point. There is complete absence of violence or passion in his correspondence; he reasons quietly; he is politic, moderate, deliberative, at times sarcastic and even humorous. He never scolds as his biographer, Mr Napier, scolds. "Brand," Mr Napier observes in a characteristic passage, "proved a scoundrel, and proceeded at once to the Prince of Orange, to whom he was introduced by another scoundrel, Gilbert Burnet." Dundee does not say that Burnet is a scoun-

drel,—simply and quietly, and with a pleasant air of contempt, he calls him "Gibby." "Even Cassillis is gone astray, *misled by Gibby*." Melfort had enclosed a letter, addressed by James to the Scottish bishops, most of whom, however, were prudently keeping out of sight. Dundee, in his reply, cannot resist the temptation to jest. "The bishops?" he says, "I know not what they are! They are now the Kirk *invisible!* I will be forced to open the letter, and send copies attested to them, and keep the original till I can find out our primate." This composure, this superiority to impotent resentment, this capacity to jest,—at a time too when almost every Scottish nobleman had proved disloyal, and when, among Highland wastes, with almost superhuman industry, he was striving to raise an army for the King, and for the great enterprise which he meditated,—are very noticeable traits in the man.

There are other respects in which these letters are characteristic. Those who have hitherto regarded Claverhouse as the ignorant partisan or mere military chief, will be surprised to make acquaintance with a statesman holding large views and solid conceptions of public policy. The writer manifests, moreover, combined with the most perfect courtesy, a singular frankness of tone and independence of aim. There is a letter to Lord Strathnaver, who had advised him to renounce King James, and had offered his mediation with the government, which breathes the true spirit of chivalry. The peer had been entirely mistaken when he supposed that the royal cause was desperate. On the contrary, the rebel government had not the shadow of stability. "However," continues the writer, "I am no less obliged to your lordship, seeing that you made an offer of your assistance at a time when you thought I needed it." His letters to Lord Murray—Athole's eldest son—are models of diplomatic address. He calmly enumerates all the personal inducements which were likely to influence a man like Murray —believed by Dundee to be false, but whom he desired, if possible, to secure—and then he proceeds in a candid statesman-like tone to admit the justice of many of the popular complaints, and to show how the abuses which had irritated the nation might be most easily redressed. But the most remarkable letters are those addressed to Melfort, the evil genius of King James. Melfort was one of Dundee's old friends; and yet he had to tell him plainly that it was necessary for the King's

interest that he should cease to hold any office about the King's person. He does this with perfect frankness, and yet in the way the least calculated to wound. "I thought in prudence for your own sake, as well as the King's, you would have thought it best to seem to be out of business for a time, that the King's business might go on smoother, and all pretext be taken away for rebellion; and this only in case the King find difficulty in his affairs; for I am obliged to tell you that, *if the people take umbrage as to their religion*, it will be, notwithstanding of all the foreign aid, a long war. . . . You desire I may tell you your faults. *I use to see none in my friends*, and, to tell you what others find, when I do not believe them, were to lose time. . . . It is the unjustest thing in the world, that not being popular must be an argument to be laid aside by the King. I do really think it were hard for the King to do it; but *glorious for you*—if once you be convinced that the necessity of the King's affairs requires it—to do it of yourself, and beg it of him."

A few words, now, regarding the campaign on which he had embarked.

Dundee, at the outset, acted with great caution. He was content to clear the Highlands of the enemy. He did not care to risk a decisive battle; and his want of cavalry, and the predatory habits of the hillmen, made him slow to quit the natural fastnesses of the north. These are the reasons for delay which he assigns in his letters to the secretary. "My Lord, I have given the King in general, account of things here; but to you I will be more particular. As to myself, I have sent you it at large. You may by it a little understand the state of the country. You will see that, when I had a seen advantage, I endeavoured to profit on it: but, on the other hand, shunned to hazard anything for fear of a ruffle; for the least of that would have discouraged all. I thought if I could gain time and keep up a figure of a party, without loss, it was my best till we got assistance: which the enemy get from England every day. . . . The only inconveniency of the delay is, that the honest suffer extremely in the Low Country in the time, and I dare not go down for want of horse — and, in part, for fear of plundering all, and so making enemies, having no pay."

At last he was prepared. Amid these sterile and dismal

defiles, as they were then deemed,—"an interminable chaos of mountain and of forest, and of the haunts of wild beasts," in the language of one of his followers,—he had gathered an army. His standard-bearer has described, in lines which, in Mr Napier's opinion, are not unworthy of the great poets of antiquity, the muster of the clans. Skye had sent forth its power. From her wild and wolfy forests all Badenoch had flocked to the fight. Isla and Iona's isles, Knapdale and Jura, Knoidart and Moidart, Rachlin and Rasay, Barra and Mull, with every neighbouring tribe, had rushed to arms. The dauntless Glengarry, the great Glencoe, the youthful Lord of the Isles, the Captain of Clanranald, Keppoch, "flaming with gold," the heroic and knightly Lochiel, Macleod of Rassa, "from the crest of whose helm a brazen serpent hisses defiance," Stewarts, Grants, Frasers, Macleans, Macneils, had joined Dundee in Lochaber, when the royal standard was unfurled. They had cleared the hill-country, and now they were prepared to sweep the plain,—not, however, until Mackay, presuming on Dundee's forced inaction, had reached the gate of the Highlands.

That July morning must have repaid Dundee for many dull and stagnant years. Life, hitherto, had gone somewhat tamely with him; but to-day he has gathered the clans, and hangs like a hawk above the pass. The joy of the falcon, as its wings quiver in the sunlight before it falls upon its prey, is, perhaps, comparable to the thrill which Dundee felt that summer morning, ere he hurled his claymores at Mackay. The fair kingdom of Scotland—lying, as it were, at his feet—was the immediate prize of victory; how many kingdoms, thereafter, who can tell?[1]

[1] That Killiecrankie, had Dundee lived, would have made him master of all Scotland cannot be doubted. The day after the news of the battle had reached Edinburgh, Duke Hamilton wrote:—"We have got no notice of Dundee's motion since the action, and we fear all Perthshire and Angus will be in arms for him generally; so what resolution the King takes should not be delayed, for *if he carries Stirling he has all Scotland.*" Sir John Dalrymple, the lord advocate, writing on the previous day, calls the news "sorry, sad, and surprising. I think the other side of Tay is lost, and Fife is in very ill tune. The Lord help us, and send you good news of your son." And Sir William Lockhart, the solicitor-general, writes: "All we can do is to entreat the King will send force with all expedition here; *for we have nothing to hinder Dundee to overrun the whole country.*"

The Presbyterian general, with 5000 men, horse and foot soldiers, passed unmolested through the pass of Killiecrankie on the morning of the 27th July, and took up a position on the north bank of the Garry. Dundee, whose headquarters were at Blair-of-Athol, around which the clans were encamped, waited until Mackay had put the pass fairly between his army and the Low Country. Leaving a small force in the enemy's front to engage his attention, he crossed the Tilt with the remainder of his men above Blair, marched round the back of the Hill of Lude, and, cresting the heights of Renroy, descended on Mackay's right flank. This move not only obliged Mackay to change his front, but, in the event of the day going against him, left him in a position of imminent peril,—the steep banks of the flooded Garry lying directly in his rear. The hill-men, however, did not immediately attack, —Dundee holding them back "until the sun had left the hill." Then—himself in the van—he threw them upon the enemy's line. He had barely 2000 men; but the impetuous charge of the Highlanders was irresistible. They had to advance across a level plain of some extent, and many fell in the advance; but Mackay's men, the moment the claymores were among them, wavered and gave way. Many fell on the field. Many were driven into the Garry. More than five hundred were captured and brought in prisoners next day by the Athole men who had taken no part in the fight. The rout of the Presbyterian army was complete. It was, in fact, utterly annihilated, —only a few fugitive horsemen reaching the Low Country in safety.

There are one or two points in the conduct of this battle which deserve to be particularly noticed.

Dundee allowed Mackay to take his army through the pass, and then threw himself between the Presbyterian general and his line of retreat. He adopted this course to make defeat decisive. At the council of war held on the morning of the battle, it was suggested that Mackay should be attacked on his passage through the pass. But Dundee refused to adopt this suggestion. "No," he said, "it is not enough to drive them back: they must be destroyed. Give us a decisive victory, and Scotland is ours in a week. Let Mackay and his troopers enter this *cul-de-sac*, and not a man of them escapes." The move was at once daring and politic: and the issue of the

day's fight fully vindicated the sagacious and far-seeing hardihood of Dundee.

It is noticeable, also, that thus early, Dundee had won the confidence of the clans. They had recognised at once the hand of a master. Nothing proves this more conclusively than the well-ascertained fact that the two armies faced each other in order of battle for more than three hours before the charge was made. It was difficult to restrain the hill-men at any time; and it must have been doubly difficult when they were being galled by the cannon which Mackay had brought with him. But the declining sun shone full in the faces of the clans; and Dundee resolutely declined battle until it had sunk behind the hills. The battle of Killiecrankie was fought in the summer twilight. These wild mountaineers, had they had their will, would have drawn their claymores, whenever, emerging from the hazel woods of Lude, they caught sight of the foe; but their chief had said that it was needful to wait, and without a murmur they obeyed.

Daring and vigilant, cautious and far-seeing, prompt and resolute, Dundee undoubtedly possessed the qualities of a great commander. Throughout the whole of the campaign he appears to have committed only one blunder. But it was a fatal one. *He led his men at Killiecrankie.* Yet it was a calculated rashness. At the council of war, held on the morning of the battle, Lochiel had declared that he would quit the camp if the general put himself in the front. The life of Dundee was more valuable to the monarchy than even a victory at Killiecrankie. But Dundee had resisted. Would the clans trust him thereafter, if they saw him seeking safety in the rear? For the future he would be prudent; but—to win the confidence of his men—he must be permitted to give one harvest-day's work to the King his master. Lochiel yielded; and when the charge was made, Dundee was in the van.

"And if any of us shall fall upon this occasion," he had said to his men before the battle, "we shall have the honour of dying in our duty, and as becomes true men of valour and conscience." He himself fell early, pierced in the right side by a musket-ball. But he lived to know that he had won a great victory. As he fell from his horse, one of his officers, a Johnstone, caught him in his arms. "How goes the day?" asked the dying Viscount; and being answered, "It goes

well for the King, but I am sorry for your lordship;" he replied, "It the less matters for me, seeing that it goes well for my master."

Dr Pitcairn wrote a classical epitaph on Claverhouse which Dryden translated, and which everybody knows; but terser and more telling was the exclamation of the old chief, who remembered the charge at Killiecrankie, at the indecisive fight of Sheriff-muir,—"Oh, for one hour of Dundee!"

JOHN DRYDEN.

JOHN DRYDEN stands in the foremost rank of English satirists. He is the most forcible and masculine of English poets. For sheer downright intellectual strength we must seek his fellow among the great philosophers and divines,—not among poets. His justice of judgment, variety of faculty, felicity of diction, splendour of invective, have rarely been matched. It is true that the finer and more delicate forms of the imagination did not visit him; his keen observant eye failed to detect their difficult beauty; his ear was deaf to their haunting music. Yet even in his infirmities we have been used to regard him as a not unworthy representative of the English type of character,—unideal, yet manly, sagacious, affectionate, and fairly if not scrupulously honest.

To Lord Macaulay, however, John Dryden was a man many degrees worse than his fellow-men. The Whig historian pursued the Tory poet with a peculiar energy of dislike. It cannot be said, perhaps, that this hostility is calculated to do its object much permanent injury. Lord Macaulay is immensely popular with the masses,

and many able men are unable to resist the charm of his diligent rhetoric and fluent logic; but the violent contrasts of light and shade to which he habitually resorts are distasteful to the critical and somewhat colourless spirit of the time, and the writers who mould the opinion of the future are little, if at all, under his influence. These men—going, it may be, to the root of the matter, yet too often brusque, arrogant, and paradoxical—are indisposed to surrender their independent judgments and their individual convictions to the guidance of any leader, and least of any to the guidance of one who sacrifices minute truthfulness to broad and striking effects, who divides so sharply the tangled motives of men, who is so constantly clever, ingenious, luminous, animated, picturesque, but who lacks, as they fancy, the subtle insight and curious cunning of the true interpreters of human nature. The fame of John Dryden,—"that noble old English lion," as Thackeray called him,—is probably safe enough: in the meantime, however, it may be worth our while to note how, and in what respects, Lord Macaulay's portrait of the great satirist is imperfect and misleading.

The Drydens, who originally came from Cumberland, settled latterly at Canon Ashby in Northamptonshire. John Dryden's great-grandfather, by his last will and testament, solemnly bequeathed his soul to his Creator, "the Holy Ghost assuring my spirit that I am the elect of God." The poet—who thus came of a Calvinistic house—was born on the 6th of August, 1631. He was educated at Westminster under Dr Bushby, and at Trinity College, Cambridge. From the University he went to town; and, as the only way by which a living could be earned by literature in those days, began to write for the stage. He continued to do so, more or less industriously, all his life. In 1668 he succeeded Sir William Davenant as poet-laureate. It was not, however, until the fierce contest on the

Exclusion Bill had broken out that Dryden's magnificent faculty as a satirist was manifested. *Absalom and Achitophel* was published in 1681. It was eagerly welcomed, and became at once amazingly popular. Dr Johnson's father, an old bookseller, told his son that the sale had never been equalled in his time, except by *Sacheverell's Trial*. *Absalom and Achitophel* was followed by *The Medal*, in which the writer ridiculed Shaftesbury; and by *Mac Flecknoe*, in which he ridiculed Shadwell. In 1686 he became a convert to Roman Catholicism; and, at the desire of James, wrote *The Hind and Panther*, to explain and vindicate the arbitrary ecclesiastical measures which the King had been induced to adopt. After the Revolution he ceased to be laureate, and returned to his old trade of playwright. The writing of plays, of prologues, and of translations, occupied the remainder of his life. To the last he retained his vigour. The celebrated *Ode to St Cecilia* was composed at "a heat" shortly before his death. He died on the 1st of May 1700, and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

Dryden was a man of an easy, indolent, and careless temper. None of his principles were deeply rooted. He never found leisure to mature his convictions. He had been a busy man from his youth upwards; he had been forced to work hard and incessantly for daily bread; and among the eager crowd of courtiers, and playwrights, and poets, he had found it difficult to keep his footing. A high sense of duty was not to be expected from a man trained in such a school. And duty, in its highest acceptation, was a word unknown in Dryden's vocabulary. He was unfitted by nature to play the part of a martyr. He had scarcely an opinion, in his earlier years at least, for which he would have gone to the stake or the pillory.

There is considerable resemblance between the character of Dryden in this respect and the character which the popular voice assigns to *The Times* newspaper. Like *The Times*, the great poet did not desire to form the opinion or to mould the policy of his contemporaries. He was content to reflect the age as in a mirror. His vigorous logic was ever eager to vindicate the fashion of the hour. His prefaces show an admirable critical sagacity; but they are often sophistical. For his plays, reflecting the popular taste, are whimsical and grotesque; and

when a critic is ready to vindicate the whimsical and grotesque, he must borrow the weapons of the sophist. He liked to float with the stream: it seemed to him neither wise nor safe to swim against the tide. Thus he was often inconsistent: his opinions were constantly changing. He welcomed Cromwell: he welcomed the Restoration. He was a Puritan in his youth: a Prelatist in his manhood: a Papist in his old age.

But it is unfair to assume that meanness or baseness lay at the root of Dryden's pliability. His genius was masculine, but his moral nature was dependent. He had a sovereign intellect, but a subject will. He needed sympathy. He liked to be liked. He leant upon others. His quick, active, generous sympathies eagerly sought for a return. He could not suffer in silence,—estranged from those who had charmed his imagination, or captivated his affections. Discord hurt and worried him: isolation was to him the keenest misery. Nor was this the worst: opposition chilled his imagination as well as his heart. Ere he could bring his faculties into highest working order, he required to be caught up, and hurried along, by the passion of the moment. To the *arbitrium popularis aurœ* he was acutely sensitive. Milton's soul was like a star, and dwelt apart; but Dryden could not work in solitude. He was in his element in the city, in the coffee-house, at court, in the theatre. It has been said that necessity forced the poet to prostitute to low present uses a sublime and noble genius. But it may be doubted whether in happier circumstances he would have done so much, or so well, as he did. His faculties were naturally sluggish, and required to be spurred into activity. His temperament, moreover, was the temperament of the orator rather than of the poet. When at his best, it is easy to see that he is *en rapport* with an imaginary audience. In the heat of an excited imagination, he addresses a listening assembly. All his greatest works—his *Absalom and Achitophel,* his *Medal,* his *Hind and Panther*—were produced, in the hurry of battle, to serve a temporary end. Had he lived in the country, and farmed his father's acres, it is more than probable that his poetry would never have risen above mediocrity—would have wanted the electric spark which is struck out when the imaginative reasoner is brought into instant contact with those whom he desires to persuade.

Dryden was thus all his life an inconsistent man. Acutely

sensitive to the changes of the seasons, he lived in an age of sudden, severe, and violent change. It was difficult in that age for the steadiest man to maintain his constancy, and Dryden scarcely made the effort. But, "if he changed" as Dr Johnson loftily observed), "he changed with the nation." You may go round with the globe—innocently enough: and inconsistency is often only another name for the inevitable progress of opinion. An obstinate man shuts his eyes and closes his ears: but Dryden, as we have seen, was easily accessible to direct and popular impressions. He sometimes went wrong; but, generally speaking, his inconsistencies will be found to represent the stages of an intellectual growth. Dryden's was essentially a teachable nature. He was never insolently bigoted. When experience had opened his eyes, he was able to lay aside pleasant vices, to renounce favourite errors, to acknowledge freely and frankly that he had been wrong. The very impressibility of his character was a point in his favour. His grasp of principle was not tenacious: but he could the more easily fling prejudices away. His taste, which had been vitiated by evil example, improved as he grew old. His enemies might tell him, indeed, that he who had once been the most vehement advocate of rhyme—"my long-loved mistress"—had become its most vehement assailant. But the reproach was in truth a compliment; for it showed that he could learn and unlearn, and that, though frequently led astray, the purity of his taste and his natural sagacity ultimately asserted their superiority.

Dryden's conversion to the Church of Rome has been, indeed, eagerly seized upon by those who dislike his political persuasion. Lord Macaulay, echoing the language of many of his contemporaries, designated him "an illustrious renegade," and attributed his change of faith to the meanest and most despicable motives. The sordid motives assigned by Lord Macaulay are inconsistent, as I have shown elsewhere, with the visible circumstances of the case; nor is it difficult—if we consider attentively the character of the man, and of the position in which he was placed—to arrive at the probable grounds of the poet's change of faith.

The Roman Catholic was the religion of the royal family,—of a family to whom Dryden was attached by feelings of strong personal regard. Charles, if the worst of kings, was yet the pleasantest of companions. Perfectly unaffected, and perfectly

fearless, he did not hesitate to mix with his subjects in the most familiar manner. And he had a shrewd eye both for men and books. He had acquired his experience in a school, indeed, which had aged him before his time. He was an old man at the Restoration. "I never till this day observed that the King was mighty grey," Pepys says, about 1662. In his careless brilliancies (and many of them are really, and not royally, brilliant only) we see a mind of great natural parts, that has been permitted to run to seed. Good-humoured, if somewhat cynical, toleration was his habitual mood. His courtiers might quiz him: he only laughed. When he heard of Rochester's well-known epigram, he observed: "Quite true: my sayings are my own, but my doings are those of my ministers." Shaftesbury, with his usual felicity, said that under King Charles the unfortunate fell lightly; and, had Charles consulted his own inclinations, he would never have sent anything sharper than a jest or an epigram after his bitterest enemies. But though habits of indulgence had weakened the spring of his mind, it still retained a fine edge. His taste was good, and he liked good books. If it be true that the fine lines of Shirley,—

> "The glories of our birth and state
> Are shadows, not substantial things;
> There is no armour against fate;
> Death lays his icy hands on kings.
> Sceptre and crown
> Must tumble down,
> And in the dust be equal made
> With the poor crooked scythe and spade,"—

were greatly admired by him, he must clearly have possessed a capacity for appreciating poetry of the highest class. Charles starved his poets; but, so long as they did not weary him with importunities, he was pleased to meet them, and to have them about him. He was frankly intimate with Waller and Dryden. He told the former, it is said, that his ode on Cromwell was superior to that on himself. "Poets, sire," was the witty apology, "succeed better in fiction than in truth." Not unfrequently, of a morning, the King might be seen with Dryden in St James's Park, conversing familiarly about the last rhyming play, or the new book of poems. Charles appears to have had

a real regard for Dryden; he was always ready to defend him when assailed, telling those critics, for instance, who charged the laureate with theft, that he only wished they would steal him plays like Dryden's; and Dryden, on his side, who loved the great, was intoxicated by this flattering intimacy with royalty. While the King lived, his laureate was one of his stanchest friends; at his death, one of his truest mourners. The attachment which he had felt for Charles was, on Charles's death, naturally transferred to James; and not only was James a Catholic, but some of the poet's nearest connections—his wife and his eldest son, among others—were already members of that Church.

Such a relationship could not fail to exercise an important influence on the opinions of a man like Dryden. His temperament, as we have seen, unfitted him for opposition. He could not put out his leaves in the shade. He liked to bask in the sunshine, not merely because it was pleasant, but because it was essential to the free and harmonious development of his poetical nature. Gracious, generous, tolerant, of a most loving and lovable disposition, he was yet entirely deficient in will. He could not separate himself from his friends; rather than do so, even when his better judgment was unconvinced, he was ready to bear them company. There is moral weakness, if not cowardice, here; the character is not severely masculine: still there is a vast difference between the man who changes his religion because he is a base and sordid adventurer, and the man who does so because he cannot bear to be divided from those to whom he is attached.

It must be remembered, also, that there was an ancient alliance between the High Tory party and Roman Catholicism. Both hated the Puritan,—the one because he had destroyed the monarchy, the other because he had carried his revolt against the Papacy to its logical conclusion—which the Church of England had wisely refused to do. The courtly gallants of that age oscillated between infidelity and Popery,—between the Papal nuncio and Hobbes, to whom, as Clarendon says, the doors of Whitehall were open.[1] Dryden did not love the priesthood of any church, but it is probable that he regarded

[1] "After the king's return he came frequently to court, where he had too many disciples, and once visited me," who do not by any

the Puritan pastors, under whom he had suffered in his youth, with peculiar dislike. For years he had been inclined to doubt; but doubt was not the mood natural to his dependent temper. When, in later life, he began to experience the need of religion, the inducements which Romanism holds out were those which appealed most directly to his mind. In the *Religio Laici*, his first serious poem, he ostensibly attacked the Papacy. But, even in this work, he showed that he was not insensible to the strength of the authority which it claimed. Such an omniscient infallible Church, he says in effect, were worth the whole canon of Scripture "cast in the Creed;" and — he continues — one cannot help wishing for such a guide, were it only possible to find him. In the interval between the publication of the *Religio Laici* and of *The Hind and Panther*, he persuaded himself that he had found what he had so earnestly desired to find, —some cheap and secure spiritual footing:—

> "What weight of ancient witness can prevail,
> If private reason hold the public scale?
> But, gracious God, how well dost thou provide
> For erring judgments an unerring guide!
> Thy throne is darkness in the abyss of light,
> A blaze of glory that forbids the sight.
> O teach me to believe Thee thus conceal'd,
> And search no farther than thyself reveal'd;
> But her alone for my director take,
> Whom thou hast promised never to forsake."

To Dryden's understanding the one position was the logical development of the other. It cannot be reasonably doubted that the writer of the *Religio Laici* was on the high road to Catholicism; especially when we know that, in his case, the intellectual craving was urged on and reinforced by the affections.

Criticism of this kind, involving, as it does, inquiry into the heart and the conscience, is always attended with a measure of uncertainty. But it appears to me that Dryden's subsequent career attests the sincerity of his change of faith. The internal evidence of *The Hind and Panther* cannot be disregarded. *The Hind and Panther is the work of an honest Roman Catholic.*

means approve of his political doctrines.—*A brief View and Survey of the dangerous and pernicious Errors to Church and State in Mr Hobbes' book entitled 'Leviathan.'*

Whatever might have been the original and exciting cause of the change, there can be no doubt that, while engaged in the composition of that remarkable poem, the writer earnestly believed that he had done his duty. He educated his younger sons in the Catholic faith: spite of solicitation, spite of menace, he never wavered in his allegiance. He had made his choice, and he did not flinch. He was true to his religion and to his king. He declined to dedicate his Virgil to William (though Tonson partly succeeded in giving the Liberator's hooked nose to the Trojan hero), and he declined to tamper with his conscience, or to conceal his religious convictions. "I must follow the dictates of my reason and of my conscience,—do my duty and suffer for God's sake. I can never repent of my constancy, since I am thoroughly persuaded of the justice of the cause for which I suffer." These expressions are taken from a letter written shortly before his death, and he died in the communion of the Church which he had adopted. He had found the rest which he coveted, and he did not care again to tempt the waves on which he had been storm-tossed.

Lord Macaulay says that Dryden had during many years earned his bread by grossly flattering rich and noble patrons; and that self-respect and a fine sense of the becoming were not to be expected from one who had led a life of mendicancy and adulation.[1] The florid dedications of that age are apt to startle a reader used to the simplicity and reserve of our own; but we should arrive at a most erroneous conclusion if we inferred that an amount of adulation which would indicate at the present time a truly despicable spirit indicated meanness and servility in the reign of Charles II. These florid dedications were the fashion of the day. They were one of the recognised forms of literary work, and were paid for accordingly. For more than a century scarcely a single work had been published by any author of note which did not carry on its title-page the name of some patron—more or less illustrious. Even Spenser condescended to pay the current tribute to Cæsar. To his fine and mystical poem fifteen of these adulatory pieces are prefixed. Some writers, no doubt, carried the practice to an extravagant and ludicrous excess. One author

[1] *History of England*, ii. 196.

dedicated each book of his translation of Hippocrates's *Aphorisms* to one of his friends, and the index to another. Dryden, in like manner, inscribed the different books of his translation of Virgil to various individuals,—"an economy of flattery," in the words of Dr Johnson, "at once lavish and discreet, which did not pass without observation." But, apart from occasional excess, the custom was one to which men of high spirit and undoubted courage did not hesitate to conform. It became a contest of wit, an intellectual piece of gymnastics,—sanctioned by taste and present custom and ancient repute. Who can represent my lady's virtue and charity, or my lord's eloquence and learning, in the richest, most splendid, and most graceful colours? *That* is what is to be done,—who among you can do it most effectively? To stand on your head, or to wear an outrageously coloured hat, may be very ridiculous and unbecoming; but the man who does so, in common with the rest of the world, cannot justly be charged with baseness. This curious and whimsical art formed in one sense the portrait-painting of the time. The artist did not essay, indeed, to represent his sitter to the life. He did not care to copy too closely the features of his patrons. They became, under his skilful manipulation, the Seasons, the Hours, the Graces. It was necessary, of course, to preserve a certain consistency; but when the naked figure had once been lightly indicated, the artist might add at will the choicest flowers of speech, and the finest bloom of fancy. This was what Dryden did,—more skilfully, more lavishly, more superbly, than any of his rivals. Pope is a noble flatterer, but after an entirely different fashion. How quietly does he render his homage—with what a delicate hand, with what refinement of tact, with what point and appositeness! His flattery is never overdone; he preserves a monumental conciseness, a terse Horatian simplicity; he is occupied upon something quite apart, and merely makes his friends a courtly bow by the way as he passes. Pope's homage is the involuntary admiration of an equal; Dryden's is the prostration of a worshipper, the ardour of a devotee. Dryden had an admirable insight into character, as his sketches of Burnet and Shaftesbury and Buckingham show; but in these triumphal processions and Olympian banquets we are not to look for nice discrimination. Lord Treasurer Clifford is a better Mæcenas, Sir Charles Sedley a more elegant Tibullus. The nobleman

who brought the poet to Whitehall is that Pollio or that Varus "who introduced me to Augustus." "The Queen of Beauty" and the "Court of Love" are represented by the Duchess of York and her handmaids. This splendid homage, coming, *purpureo ore*, from the master of English song, dignifies adulation. It is the flattery of a Raleigh,—he kneels and casts his cloak before the queen.

> "When factious rage to cruel exile drove
> The Queen of Beauty and the Court of Love,
> The Muses dropped with their forsaken arts,
> And the sad Cupids broke their useless darts:
> Our fruitful plains to wilds and deserts turned,
> Like Eden's face, when banished man it mourned.
> Love was no more, when loyalty was gone,
> The great supporter of his awful throne.
> Love could no longer after Beauty stay,
> But wandered northward to the verge of day,
> As if the sun and he had lost their way.
> But now the illustrious nymph, returned again,
> Brings every grace triumphant in her train."

A dedication by Dryden, therefore, is to be regarded solely as an intellectual *tour de force*, not necessarily involving servility of feeling or lack of self-respect; and it is in this light, I have no hesitation in saying, that whatever I otherwise know of the facts induces me to regard it.

The spirit of the literary and political controversy of that age was savagely intemperate; but it is eminently unfair to single out Dryden, as Lord Macaulay has done, to point the moral of his censure. "The spirit by which Dryden and several of his compeers were at this time animated against the Whigs, deserves to be called fiendish."[1] The converse of the proposition—so far at least as Dryden was concerned—would more nearly have represented the truth. Dryden was not a vindictive man. His robust and generous nature could not harbour petty malice. Congreve says that he was humane, compassionate, moderate in conversation, gentle in correction, ready to forgive. And probably no public man of that day had more to forgive, had been so coarsely and bitterly assailed. He had not only been ridiculed and caricatured; he had been beaten by Rochester's hired ruffians, he had been accused

[1] *History of England*, i. 403.

of gross and infamous crimes, his peculiarities of face and manner had been publicly exhibited on the stage. He was not the man to allow such assaults to pass with impunity. He felt them keenly, and at the moment (though his resentments were not long-lived) he resented them bitterly. We may believe that he partly knew and understood how immensely superior he was to the rivals who were pitted against him; yet his tone of arrogant confidence and ostentatious superiority was clearly to some extent assumed. Thackeray justly lauded this "noble old English lion;" and we see in his character something of the lion's generosity, and of the lion's violence. With an air of intense disdain and contempt for the insects that buzz about his ears, he unites swift indignation and almost breathless anger. The kingly beast is persuaded that they are vermin; yet—for the reptiles hurt him—he roars and winces and lashes his tail fiercely. And he could not afford to be serene. His position was a false one: he had quitted the cool poetic woodside, and descended into the heated and dusty arena; for bare life he had been forced to undertake work for which he was unfitted, and to follow an ignoble calling; to bring his magnificent powers of invective and persuasion to uphold a rotten dynasty of kings and poets. Dryden was thus always most violent when clearly and obviously in the wrong. Yet his anger did not last long: he quickly repented. He could not hate in cold blood. And though he was not fastidious about the weapons which he used (generally seizing that which lay nearest at the moment), it cannot be said that his writings were disgraced by the brutal ferocity which disgraced his adversaries. "As for knave," he says, "and sycophant, and rascal, and impudent, and devil, and old serpent, and a thousand such good-morrows, I take them to be only names of parties; and could return murderer, and cheat, and Whig-trapper, and Sodomite; and, in short, the goodly number of the seven deadly sins, with all their kindred and relations;" but he would not stoop to such revenge. His personalities were boisterous but good-humoured. He pursued Shadwell pertinaciously; but there was no rancour in his laughter. Nor was Dryden's poetical satire the satire of a "fiend;" he was our greatest satirist, and he felt, no doubt, the enjoyment which the true artist feels in his work; but *The Medal*, and *Mac Flecknoe*, and *Absalom*

and Achitophel show none of the mercilessness of Swift. Swift's sustained power of ironical reasoning, inferring as it did for its exercise a mind of savage sagacity and little sensibility, was a power which Dryden did not exercise, and could not have exercised. However mean the character, however detestable the argument, the Dean adopted the one, and developed the other with cruel logic. A weak or generous nature would have dropped the mask at times; the consistency would have been impaired, but our sense of justice would have been gratified by occasional denunciations of the folly and villany and stupidity which were being depicted; but Swift never winces, never blushes, is never pained, but goes straight on, without fear or love, to complete his gloomy fresco. Dryden, on the contrary, is apt to relent. He knows that even Shaftesbury has good points; and he feels uneasy until he has pointed them out. Butler, who did not love Dryden, ridiculed the heroic play in a brilliant and unsparing satire. The high-flown and metaphysical amours of Almanzor and Almahide are grotesquely reflected in the repartees of Cat and Puss at a caterwauling.

"*Cat.* Forbear, foul ravisher, this rude address;
Canst thou at once both injure and caress?
Puss. Thou hast bewitch'd me with thy powerful charms,
And I, by drawing blood, would cure my harms.
Cat. He that does love would set his heart a tilt,
Ere one drop of his lady's should be spilt!
Puss. Your wounds are but without, and mine within;
You wound my heart, and I but prick your skin;
And while your eyes pierce deeper than my claws,
You blame the effect of which you are the cause."

Yet Dryden, who willingly acknowledged the terse, if moody, power of Butler's muse, replied only by a compliment. "'Tis enough for one age to have neglected Mr Cowley and starved Mr Butler." He admired generously; for his taste was catholic and unfastidious. He loved Shakespeare; he defended Milton; he extolled Donne and Cowley; he greeted younger writers — Congreve and Addison — with an eager welcome. There was no place in any niche of his soul for paltry jealousy or base dislike.

Lord Macaulay is particularly severe upon what he is pleased

to call the "whinings" of Dryden after the Revolution.[1] Swift, whose animosity to Dryden has often been noticed,[2] and who ridiculed his translations from Virgil in *The Battle of the Books*, has skilfully caricatured this failing of his declining years in the Introduction to *A Tale of a Tub*. The Introduction is a piece of admirable satire, and reflects with consummate fidelity the tone of many of Dryden's apologies and vindications. There can be no doubt that his complaints were sometimes undignified. But he did not particularly study dignity; and, as we have seen, he was not a martyr who could bear pain in silence. His amiable, impulsive nature, when chilled by neglect or unkindness, became querulous; and he would have been an entirely different man from what I conceive him to have been, had he displayed his weaknesses with a less engaging frankness.

It must be admitted, moreover, that Dryden manifested no very lofty conception of his literary vocation. The drama was his meat and drink—nothing more. He was indolent about fame, and the opinion of posterity did not inspire him with any awe. But he wished to stand well with his contemporaries; their goodwill was pleasant to him; and for immediate popularity he was ready to sacrifice his higher instincts and his better judgment. Sir Walter Scott has finely lamented the cost at which this popularity was purchased.

> "Dryden, in immortal strain,
> Had raised the Table Round again,
> But that a ribald king and court
> Bade him toil on to make them sport:
> Demanded for their niggard pay,
> Fit for their souls, a looser lay,
> Licentious satire, song, and play:
> The world defrauded of the high design,
> Profaned the God-given strength, and marr'd the lofty line."

But the sacrifice did not pain him; his indolent nature was easily contented; he did not struggle, and he did not aspire. He never pursued a coy and unapproachable ideal,—his buxom mistress dispensed her favours freely. Had he attempted a higher style of poetical composition, he would probably have

[1] *History of England*, iii. 24 and Index.

[2] To the well-known "Cousin Swift will never be a poet," this animosity has been attributed.

failed. His imagination, though fertile, was neither subtle nor pathetic; his ear wanted tune and fineness of melody; and he was often, in consequence, outrageously absurd. He saw immediately around him, indeed, with remarkable clearness; but he was not far-sighted. He might be pardoned for believing that the ashes of Cromwell would be permitted to rest in a "peaceful urn;" but his *Ode on the Birth of the Prince of Wales* shows, as has been said, "a profound insensibility of the precipice on which the King was standing." When sophistry could be dispensed with, when he was not consciously unconscientious, he exercised, without doubt, a great and admirable common-sense. His taste in the main was sound,—just, if not severe. In spite of sophistry, in spite of slovenliness, he was the first great English critic.

And among English poets he must ever hold a foremost place. His superiority to the poets of his own and of the immediately preceding age, consisted in his *directness*. The plague, accident, violent death, had, ere the execution of Charles I., sadly thinned the ranks of the great old school of English poets. Ben Jonson, Beaumont, Fletcher, Carew, Herbert, Suckling, had died, either before Dryden was born, or during his boyhood. Apart from Shakespeare (who belongs to no school in particular), Ben Jonson was the greatest of the goodly company who met at the Apollo and the Mermaid, where those "wit-combats," celebrated by Fuller, had been held, and may be taken as the representative of the others. Jonson united an exquisite simplicity, an unpremeditated sweetness, with a laborious but intense and powerful understanding. Snatches of delicious music alternate in his plays with the most compact, robust, and nervous work. In the pungency of that grave and somewhat ascetic moralist there was no levity nor flippancy. He hewed and chiselled the characters of his drama in the spirit and after the fashion in which Buonarotti worked. His choice of subject, indeed, is often open to exception. It is characteristic, perhaps, but unfelicitous. He expended wit and imagination and copious learning upon the vilest and most repulsive shapes. The wretched figure of a blear-eyed miser, or of a cunning knave, is cast in pure gold, is dwelt upon with a devotion of hatred, with a passion of untiring and consuming scorn. Even among the smallest of these early lyrists, we are delighted by a charming delicacy and

sweetness of melody and archness of expression,—the first fine careless rapture of the children of song. But when Dryden began to write, the echoes of the old school were growing faint. Evil tendencies, which, though in the bud, could be discerned even in the greatest of the Elizabethan dramatists, had expanded and developed. The euphuistic poets played upon words, the metaphysical upon ideas. Truth and melody were sacrificed—the one to mental, the other to verbal dexterity. The tone of this school was comparatively pure; but the courtier poets of the Restoration, who brought French manners as well as French idioms across the Channel, added a *soupçon* of false and heartless wit. The verse of Dorset,—

> "Love is a calmer, gentler joy,
> Smooth are his locks, and soft his pace;
> *Her* Cupid is a blackguard boy,
> That runs his link full in your face,"—

might be used to indicate the difference between the older and the later poets of the Stuarts. Herrick, indeed, still lived, and Herrick, who had talked with the old masters, had caught their glow,—some of their light had fallen upon him. Except Herrick, there was not a man living in England in 1660 who could have written *The Sweet Neglect*, or the *Odes to Celia*. In *The Hesperides*, with a vast mass of indecent rubbish, we find poems that breathe a true simplicity, others that preserve a tender solemnity, like that of the failing light or of the autumn leaves:—

> "Fair daffodils, we weep to see
> You haste away so soon;
> As yet the early rising sun
> Has not attain'd his noon.
> Stay, stay,
> Until the hastening day
> Has run
> But to the even-song;
> And having prayed together, we
> Will go with you along!

But Herrick stood almost alone, and it was to the poetical society I have described that Dryden was introduced. Here he at once became a power, and his weapons were simplicity and directness. There was little resemblance, indeed, between the moral and somewhat sullen intensity of Jonson, and Dryden's keen and trenchant faculty. Nor did he escape unharmed

from the taint of the prevailing poetical taste. Passages of false magnificence and gaudy ornament abound in his plays; and his earlier poems are disfigured by the mental and verbal conceits which were then so popular. But the drama, for which he had really no vocation—"to the stage," he confesses, "my genius never much inclining me"—is to be regarded only as the workshop where he polished his arms; and his great natural sagacity always kept him more or less true to nature, and gave even to his most whimsical conceits the air of probability which a logical and powerful intellect stamps upon its creations. His contemporaries and immediate predecessors had lost directness as well as simplicity. They curveted round their subject; they were allusive, illustrative, anecdotical, antithetical, but never straightforward. Dryden went straight to the mark. He hit hard. He was a sturdy thinker, an energetic controversialist. He reasoned closely,—vigorously, at least, if not always accurately. His wit was keen and incisive. His illustrations were compact,—splendid as the garb of a Cavalier, yet fitting with Puritanic precision. A man possessed of such a faculty could not fail, coming at the time he came, to work a revolution in our literature, and the change in modern poetical taste is largely due to the influence of Dryden.

To this vigorous directness were added wonderful fertility of conception, and extraordinary splendour of language. He contracted to supply the theatre with four plays a-year,—in one year he produced no less than six. They may not intrinsically be worth much; but when we consider that they are ingenious and elaborate, that they abound in amusing incidents and striking situations, and that nearly all of them are written in rhyme, we obtain some idea of his copious resources and of his amazing inventiveness. Dryden's "mighty line" is a household word. It is needless to dwell upon that incomparable command of the stateliest music of our mother-tongue, to which the author of *Absalom and Achitophel* and of *The Hind and Panther* attained. Such lines as the lines that close his great satirical poem,—

> "Henceforth a series of new time began,
> The mighty years in long procession ran;
> Once more the god-like David was restored,
> And willing nations knew their lawful lord,"—

are full of life, and fire, and strength, and kingly dignity.

Though Dryden was unquestionably the most accomplished reasoner in verse that we have had in England—reasoning even more freely and accurately in verse than in prose,—a rare, if not admirable gift—yet it is as a satirist that his fame endures. The form of our humorous literature has undergone a great change since the Revolution. Charles II., with keen mother-wit, is reported to have said of certain cautious conspirators, that they committed treason by advice of counsel; and our humorists, in an age when, according to high authority, "truth is a libel," virtually write after the same fashion. In this way all our popular irony is inferential, and, whether in the speeches of Mr Disraeli, the romances of Mr Thackeray, the criticisms of *Punch*, or the poems of Bon Gaultier, derives its force from the subtle reserve and sarcastic delicacy of a weapon that wounds with the stealthy stroke of the stiletto. But Dryden, in his satirical as in his other poems, is eminently direct and emphatic. He tells us what he thinks of his victim in a perfectly unmistakable manner. Thus, in an exhaustive couplet, he crucifies his unwieldy rival:—

> "With all his bulk, there's nothing lost in Og,
> For every inch that is not fool is rogue."

But we will fail to do justice to Dryden unless we regard him as a truly *imaginative* satirist. We see little of the imagination in his other works; he does not deal effectively with the simple and elemental passions to which most great poets appeal; he is never pathetic, and seldom sublime. But in his satire he rises to a high imaginative altitude. The difference between the satire of Dryden and the satire of Pope is the difference between a rebuke by Ezekiel and the prettiness of an epigram. There is an artful suddenness in Pope's attack. He is a master of surprise. He seems to pause, and turn indifferently away, when in the very act of raising his hand to strike the meditated blow,—

> "Yet then did Gildon draw his venal quill,—
> I wished the man a dinner, and sat still;
> Yet then did Dennis rave with furious fret,
> I never answered,—*I was not in debt.*"

None of this artifice is observable in Dryden. He plays his

hand boldly and openly,—he does not condescend to finesse. Yet there is an imaginative amplitude in his sarcasm to which Pope could not rise. Not sharp and stinging words only, but rich and vigorous intellectual conceptions, does he hurl at the heads of his adversaries. Contrast, for instance, the Shadwell of *Mac Flecknoe* with the Goddess of Night and Chaos in the *Dunciad*. *Mac Flecknoe* reveals the energy, cohesion, organisation, and perfect unity of a high imaginative conception. The man who wrote it was for the time heated by the fire of the imagination as truly as Shakespeare was when he wrote *Macbeth*, as truly as Milton was when he raised Pandemonium out of Chaos. But the picture of the Goddess of Dulness, though immensely clever, ingenious, and pointed, does not present any one distinct conception. It is a series of epigrams, elaborately worked out, and nicely tied together, with the view of producing a striking effect, but from which any one could be removed without injury to the rest. Dryden's lines, on the contrary, have been fused in the crucible of the imagination, and we could neither add nor take away without doing violence to the whole. And how magnificent the satire is! The rest to some faint meaning make pretence, but—Shadwell never *deviates* into sense. The others are not quite destitute of wit, the light sometimes breaks through the mist; but—Shadwell's fogs *prevail* upon the day. Taken as a whole, this is, perhaps, the greatest passage in Dryden's works, and in English satirical literature.

Dryden's satire, however, though eminently direct, is not wanting in discrimination. He had a fine eye for character, and, like a clever tactician, did ample justice to the good points of his adversaries. The most admirable and elaborate portrait that he has left is probably that of Shaftesbury. The "formidable cripple" seems to have fascinated the poet's imagination — as indeed he might. For, beyond all controversy, Shaftesbury, after Cromwell, was the most remarkable man of his age. Buckingham, who occupies nearly as large a place in the history of the time, was little more than his henchman, impelled by the sinister influence of an intellect more adventurous, and not less excitable, than his own. Though Otway represented Shaftesbury as the lewd Antonio in *Venice Preserved*, he does not appear to have been dissolute; he was an incorruptible judge; his domestic affections were strong. His address was eminently winning; his features were fine; his

brown hair soft and abundant: "Mine was then," he says, in his Diary, "a flaxen inclined to brown, soft, and turning at the ends." He had been born a cripple; he could not move without his man and his crutch; he suffered from daily epileptic fits—"I was never," he remarks, "without a dull aching pain of that side"—yet he was an animated companion, and a busy and restless politician.[1] He was the counsellor of Cromwell—"a vermin wriggling in the usurper's ear"—and the chancellor of Charles. Cromwell, who at a time when it was unusual to have two Christian names, compared Anthony Ashley Cowper to Marcus Tullius Cicero, "the little man with three names," is said by Burnet to have offered to make him king. Charles declared that his chancellor knew more law than all his judges, and more divinity than all his bishops. He was the keenest and sharpest wit in an age of wits. His jests were as good as the King's—which is high praise. "Shaftesbury," said Charles, "I believe thou art the wickedest dog in my dominions." "Of a *subject*, sire, I believe I am," was the answer. During his speech against the Test Bill, overhearing an indolent prelate say, "I wonder when he will have done preaching," he replied in an under tone, but so as to be dis-

[1] He used to jest on his lameness,—"They must be convinced," he said, before his trial, "that I could not run away;"—and it figured prominently in the caricatures of the time. "With this he made a great noise, and bustled about as fast as his legs, man, and stick could carry him." (*Examen*, 123.) His Diary, which is a curious and sometimes graphic piece of writing, has been published by Mr Christie in *The Shaftesbury Papers*. It is a curious fact, that though there is an entry on January 30, 1649, no mention is made of the event which took place on that day—the execution of Charles I. His presumed pretensions to the crown of Poland were the theme of endless merriment. In a contemporary burlesque, an apparition appears to Shaftesbury. "In a hideous tone it cried out, 'I am a *plot*. Woe to England! Farewell till '78,' and vanished. No sooner was it gone than a stupid amazement seized upon the Majesty of Poland, and cast him into a deep sleep, where he lay till morning, when awakening, he found himself stript of all the high and aspiring thoughts that before had filled his mind; pity and compassion towards his native land completely cooled his ambition, and from that moment he laid by all thoughts of converting the Turk, and resolved to stay at home for confounding the Pope."—*A modest Vindication of the Earl of Shaftesbury, concerning his being elected King of Poland.* Dryden alludes to the report in *The Medal*:—

> "The word pronounced aloud by shrieval voice
> Lætamur, which, in Polish, is Rejoice."

tinctly audible throughout the house, "When I am made a bishop, my lord." He was a persuasive orator,—excelling alike in raillery and denunciation. His application of Cato's *Delenda est Carthago* to the commercial Republic of Holland was eminently felicitous, though it gave the municipality of Amsterdam, when he fled to that city, opportunity for a magnanimous retort: "Ab nostra Carthagine, nondum deleta, salutem accipe." His Puritanic training sometimes communicated a Scriptural quaintness and picturesqueness to his polished raillery. "We have a little sister," he exclaimed, when speaking of the Protestantism of the Continent, "and she hath no breasts; what shall we do for our sister on the day when she shall be spoken for? If she be a wall, we will build on her a palace of silver; if she be a door, we will enclose her with boards of cedar." When the prodigality of Charles to his mistresses was being discussed, he observed, "If I must speak of them, I shall say as the prophet did to Saul: *What meaneth this bleating of the cattle?* And I hope the King will make the same answer: *That he reserves them for sacrifice, and means to deliver them up to please his people.*" Yet with all these rare gifts, Shaftesbury was an eminently dangerous man. He had a passionate craving for the excitement of political intrigue. When in office he could afford to be just and moderate; but whenever he went into opposition, he was eager to embark in the wildest and most daring adventures. On giving up the seals, he said, "It is only laying down my gown, and putting on my sword." Dryden, in the preface to *The Medal*, advised the Whigs never to own the bottom of their principles, "for fear they should be treason;" and the sarcasm was peculiarly applicable to the fearless and intrepid intellect of their leader. "The worst title makes the best king," was the argument by which he supported the pretensions of Monmouth. Such a man, had he been less fickle and unsteady, would have made a great and successful party leader. He was the very genius of faction. North attempts to show that his whole life was a consistent intrigue against the Crown; but the popular nickname, "My Lord Shiftsbury," correctly indicates the instability of his public conduct. He was governed, indeed, by two diametrically opposite forces. He was a patrician demagogue. His speeches on behalf of democracy, even those addressed to the Parliaments of the Protectorate, are the speeches of a natural aristocrat.

This is the man upon whom Dryden has lavished his richest and most splendid invective. It is none the less effective because we see that the poet, like the rest of the world, had been unable to resist the subtle charm of that exquisite and noble address, and that he loves even while he chastises. For the scandal which imputes the introduction of a passage of qualified eulogy into the second edition of *Absalom and Achitophel* is altogether undeserving of credit. The motive which induced Dryden, apart from the genuine admiration which he felt for Shaftesbury's versatile genius, to introduce this eulogium, was clearly a different motive. The artist knew that an air of judicial fairness, while softening the acrimony, would increase the weight of his censure.

Such was John Dryden's life. It is a life where neither the heroic constancy of the martyr, nor the imaginative seclusion and loftiness of the idealist, have any place. But it is one not less interesting to those who are not afraid to look closely, yet fairly and temperately, at human nature. For it is the life of a great man who descended into the arena, who mixed with the crowd, who drudged painfully for daily bread, who, in an unpropitious and unhappy age, was forced to keep body and soul together as he best might. That after half a century of ignoble and ill-requited toil he retained a youthful ingenuousness and purity of soul, need not be maintained. But that an evil life had destroyed his manliness, his sincerity, his kindly heart, his natural generosity of temper, and had converted him into a sordid knave and hypocritical adventurer, who sold his birthright for a mess of pottage and his master for thirty pieces of silver, is a view which is refuted by the clearest evidence, internal and external, and which we may safely refuse to entertain.

THE GREAT
LORD BOLINGBROKE.

—o—

LORD BOLINGBROKE concludes his famous letter to Sir William Wyndham by declaring that he is not solicitous for an acquittal, either from his own or from future times. "As to the opinion of mankind in general, and the judgment which posterity will pass on these matters, I am under no great concern—*Suum cuique decus posteritas rependit.*" Posterity has taken him at his word. The memory of St John has been assailed down to our own days with peculiar virulence and an astonishing unanimity of dislike. Some respect is due to the universal opinion of mankind; and, at the present moment especially, a dangerous anxiety prevails to substitute individual crotchets for the unimpeached traditions of centuries. The intricate and perplexing relations of Henry VIII. with the Reformation deserve, and have received, grave and attentive reconsideration; but we can only smile when we are informed by Mr Chadwick, in his *Life of Daniel Defoe*, that our religion and liberties have been preserved by Providence *and* the Duchess of Marlborough. Yet there are circumstances connected

with Bolingbroke's political career which should make us accept the opinion of the majority with reserve, if not with distrust. We can write with temper of the latter days of the Empire, or of the constitutions of the Mediæval Republics; but the reign of Anne still rouses and enlists the passions of partisans. And Bolingbroke has been impartially assailed by every party. It was his misfortune to incur the resentment of the Whigs and the resentment of the Tories. He was attacked by the friends of the Revolution and by the enemies of the Revolution, by the Nonjurors and by the Presbyterian Dissenters, by Williamites and by Jacobites, by Atterbury and by Defoe. The Whigs, he himself declared, had done all they could to expose him for a fool, and to brand him for a knave; and though the Tories had not impeached him for treason to the State, they had impeached him for treason to themselves. "That last burst of the cloud," he exclaimed, "has gone near to overwhelm me." There are some open questions in our Histories as in our Cabinets; and the character of Bolingbroke may still be regarded as an open question —and not improperly. At all events, the writer who maintains that Henry St John was abler and honester than most of his contemporaries, is not necessarily ventilating a caprice, or airing a paradox.

The indictment against Bolingbroke is a lengthy document. He was a violent and vindictive politician. He served no master faithfully. He was false to the house of Hanover. He was false to the house of Stuart. He intrigued against his best friends—against Marlborough, who had raised him to office, against Harley, who kept him in it. The only legacy which the statesman bequeathed to his country was a shameful and disastrous peace. His literary works do not redeem his reputation; they are brilliant in style, but the sentiment is affected,

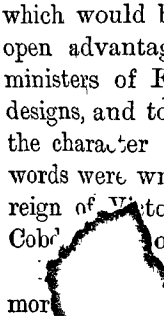
and the reflections are tawdry and commonplace. He was an unbeliever. He led a dissolute life. There was no soundness in him, no fairness of judgment, no fixity of principle. From its beginning to its close, his career was essentially meretricious. And an ambitious and profligate manhood fitly culminated in a miserable old age.

There can be little doubt that this estimate is to some extent correct. I believe, indeed, that the notices of his excesses which have reached us have been pretty highly coloured; the picture of a rake at one time administering with vigour the affairs of an empire, at another toying with his mistress, at another presiding over a bacchanalian orgy, has been industriously repeated since Tacitus drew Petronius; and the truth probably is, that St John's private life was not wilder than the lives of most of his contemporaries. Most of his contemporaries used profane oaths, treated the other sex with improper levity, and drank a great deal more claret than was good for them. It cannot be maintained that, in an age of licence, St John was in any sense an ascetic. He drank, in his earlier years at least, nearly as hard as the solemn and blameless Harley. He could chat with a pretty orange-girl at the door of the theatre, or with a lively actress in short petticoats behind the scenes. Goldsmith says that Miss Gumley was the most extravagant young lady in town, and St John's name was coupled with Miss Gumley's. But his excesses did not cloud his intellect nor harden his heart. He was good-natured. He was a kind master. He liked children. He zealously assisted his brothers. Old Mrs Delany used to relate how, as a little girl, she had gone with the great Lord Bolingbroke to the puppet-show to see the fight between Punch and the Pig (a travesty on Nicolini's fight with the lion in Hydaspes), and how she had sat on his lap. It is said that he did not behave well to his first wife,

but she loved him faithfully notwithstanding, and could not bear to hear evil things spoken of her lord. "I am more insipid and dull than ever," she writes to Swift, "except in some places, and there I am a little fury, especially if they dare mention my dear lord without respect, which sometimes happens,"—happens not unfrequently doubtless, as the letter was not written until after his fall. To his second wife, the Marquise de Villette, he was devotedly attached; and the Marquise repaid his constancy by a tender fidelity, which only burned warmer and brighter as the shadows lengthened and the night drew near. It is unlikely that he could have secured and retained the regard of two high-spirited and intelligent women, if his nature had been utterly corrupted. He was a delightful companion. With Pope and Swift, and Prior and Gay, and Peterborough and Arbuthnot around him, the handsome secretary threw off the cares of office. He unbent wholly. "Harry" was the most brilliant member of the brilliant society which enjoyed "Mat's" airy pleasantries, and "Jonathan's" solemn jests. Pope loved him better than he loved any other human being except his mother and Gay; and he has embalmed his name in the finest and most splendid flattery. Few English statesmen, indeed, have had such associates. Of no other English statesman can it be said, as of St John, that he charmed away the gloomy wrath of Swift, and was regarded by Pope with fanatical ardour.

Even his enemies have admitted that St John was a man of brilliant powers. He was a great natural orator. Nor was he a great speaker only; he wrote the English language with remarkable purity and energy. And, in several respects, it cannot be denied, he was sound as well as brilliant. On many subjects of national concern his views were large and sagacious. The Tory leader

was the first of the free-traders. The liberal commercial policy which he tried to introduce was defeated by the ignorance and the bigotry of his political foes; but his letters on the subject still exist, and vindicate the soundness of his judgment, and his lofty superiority to sectarian prejudices. "I believe it will be of use," he writes to the Duke of Shrewsbury, the English ambassador at Paris during the period when the treaty of peace was being negotiated, "to insinuate to Monsieur de Tercy that as, among other things, the factious people here intend, by their opposition to the settlement of any trade with France, to keep the nations estranged from each other, to cultivate the prejudices which have been formerly raised, and which, during two long wars, have taken deep root, and also to prevent the wearing of them out, which would be the natural necessary consequence of an open advantageous trade; so we on our part, and the ministers of France on theirs, ought to counteract their designs, and to finish what relates to commerce more in the character of statesmen than of merchants." These words were written in the reign of Anne, and not in the reign of Victoria; they are the words, not of Richard Cobden, but of Henry St John.



look a little more closely at some of the more dramatic incidents of his singular career.

The first Parliament of the eighteenth century met at Westminster on the 6th of February 1701. William's war with France had been terminated a year or two previously by the treaty of Ryswick. There was a lull in the storm; but the sword had been unwillingly returned to its scabbard; and it was obvious that, whenever the combatants had breathed themselves, the conflict would be renewed. The Whig Junto—Somers, Montague, Wharton—had been dismissed during the previous autumn, and Godolphin and Marlborough were in

power. Godolphin had held office almost constantly since the Restoration. He was silent, discreet, industrious: he was a perfect man of business; he had no opinions; he had been as useful to James as he had been to Charles, and as useful to William as he had been to James. Thirty years previously he had married Margaret Blagge, one of Queen Katherine's maids of honour—a pure and innocent girl, who, amid a dissolute society, contrived to preserve her fair name unspotted.[1] She wrote to Evelyn in one of the earliest of her quaint and delightful letters, that the heart of her husband had been touched by the divine grace, and that both of them earnestly desired to leave the Court, and settle somewhere in the country, remote from the entanglements of the world. She was soon removed from these entanglements, for she died in childbed; and her husband, unspeakably afflicted, laid her in the remote village church of Breague, in the parish of Godolphin in Cornwall, where the Godolphins had lived since the Conquest. He had since her death worked hard for a quarter of a century; not very desirous apparently to be released from the entanglements of office; and was now Lord High Treasurer and a Knight of the Garter. The reputation which he had won was not exactly the reputation which Margaret Blagge would have coveted. Sidney Godolphin was a favourite subject with the wits and poets of his day. Swift, in airy and graceful *badinage*, compared the white rod of the High Treasurer to the rod of Moses which became a devouring serpent, to the [illegible]stick on which the witch rides to her midnight revel ([illegible]; the morning dawn resumes the peaceful state of co[illegible]"), to the rod of Hermes, and to a Newmarket s[illegible]pire of Achilles, "down from ancestors divine [illegible] the hero's line," was a sapless twig; but th[illegible]mer, who could count upon the votes of the [illegible]was full of juice, shooting in golden boughs and golden fruit,

> "And he, the Dragon never sleeping,
> Guarded each fair Hesperian pippin."

And Pope, when discoursing upon the inconsistencies of human nature, expressed his surprise that the man whose com-

[1] *The Life of Mrs Godolphin*, by John Evelyn of Wooton, Esq. Edited by Samuel, Lord Bishop of Oxford: 1848.

prehensive head and uncorrupted heart had saved Europe, yet had left England unbetrayed, should pride himself more highly upon his skill at piquet, or upon his tact at a bet, than upon his career as a minister. Marlborough, though he still affected to coquet with St Germains, had succeeded in obtaining the confidence of William, and held a chief, if not the chief place, in the Godolphin Cabinet.

Henry St John was among the members who, in 1701, entered the House of Commons for the first time. He was descended from a patrician house, and the blood of his family had mingled with the Tudors. He could laugh at Harley, when Harley, "in vain discourses over his claret," boasted of the renown of his ancestry; yet St John was proud of his descent; and, on this score, even Swift sometimes condescended to flatter him. "My birth, although from a family not undistinguished in its time, is many degrees inferior to yours." In the civil wars, though both Cavalier and Puritan soldiers had issued from the house, the St Johns had inclined to side with the Parliament; and the loyal Clarendon declared that they were "a mutinous family." Henry St John was now in his twenty-third year. He had been at Eton with Robert Walpole, and at Christ Church when the Phalaris controversy was fluttering the dons of that aristocratic seat of letters. He had afterwards travelled on the Continent, residing for some time in Paris, where he became acquainted with Matthew Prior. He had sat at the feet of Dryden, and heard the old man, trembling with nervous excitement, repeat the famous Ode to St Cecilia, the morning after it was composed. As a boy, he had been forward and reckless; he was now renowned for his "frantic bacchanals." At length the House of Commons was open to him, and he carried into that famous assembly the wit and the passion which had delighted, and sometimes subdued, these fevered revellers. He might now become, as he aspired to be, the Petronius of his age.

St John quickly acquired the favour of the House, for he possessed in a high degree the peculiar talents which are fitted to charm an assembly at once popular and patrician. He was tall, well-made, of a handsome and gallant presence. The aquiline nose, the dark-brown hair, the winning smile, the lofty forehead, the eager and piercing expression of the eyes, are alluded to by many of his contemporaries. Wigs, powdered

or unpowdered, were then generally worn; but St John never adopted the fashion, and continued, even in advanced life, to wear his unpowdered hair in negligent curls, tied back with a long streaming ribbon. His manners were frank and cordial, and his wit was ready. But he was pre-eminently an orator. Possessing the instinct which enables a speaker to bring himself into sympathy with his audience, skilful in detecting the weak points of an adversary's argument, skilful in concealing the weak points of his own, ready, adroit, intrepid, St John was, by his constitution, a parliamentary debater. And to these gifts he added others scarcely less essential—a finished delivery, a fervid logic, a curious felicity of expression; above all, a capacity for prolonged and trenchant invective. He could rebuke and he could ridicule. He was passionate and he was ironical. His scorn tempered his passion, and his passion gave a glow to his scorn. He became a power in St Stephen's before he had been a year within its walls. He assailed Montague, he assailed Wharton, he assailed Somers; and the country squires listened with open ears, cheered him lustily, and ranged themselves under his banner. Such a master of invective had never before sat in the House of Commons; and it may be doubted whether any one, with the single exception of Mr Disraeli, equally renowned in the fine but dangerous science of parliamentary fence, has sat there since.

During the four years that elapsed between St John's election and his appointment to office, the Commons and the army were busily engaged,—the army attacking the French, the Commons assailing Whig Ministers and Presbyterian Dissenters. William was dead; Anne had succeeded to the throne, and Marlborough was at the head of the Allies,—sordidly parsimonious while lavishing the lives of men and the wealth of a nation. Somers and Halifax had been impeached and acquitted, and the Occasional Conformity Bill continued to be vigorously passed by the Commons and vigorously rejected by the Lords. The Occasional Conformity Bill, which occupies so large a space in the history of these years, was intended to restrain a practice which had become habitual with the opulent Dissenters who aspired to civic office. They could not become Sheriffs or Lord Mayors until they had partaken of the sacrament of the Supper according to the rites of the Church of England; and this many of them had been in the habit of

doing, as matter of form, when elected. The bill provided that these evasions of the law should be punished by heavy fines. If a Dissenter went to church once, he might continue to do so, and keep his place; but he must take the consequences if he chose to return to the conventicle. The controversy occasioned by this bill led to the publication of Defoe's most famous pamphlet, *The Shortest Way with the Dissenters.* Defoe was a Dissenter, but he was not a Dissenter of the opulent school; and he could consistently hold that to receive the sacrament merely as a qualification for civic honours was a scandalous practice, and "a playing at bo-peep with God Almighty." Thus the peculiar irony of this *jeu d'esprit* is to be ascribed to its author's peculiar and rather isolated position. He killed two birds with one stone. He disapproved of the persecuting policy of the Church; he disapproved of the dishonourable tactics of Dissent; and he rebuked both. The spirit of martyrdom, he said, was over. Men who would go to church to be chosen sheriffs and mayors, would go to forty churches rather than be hanged. If one severe law were passed and punctually executed, that whoever was found at a conventicle should be banished the nation, and the preacher be hanged, the unity desired would be speedily secured. But the light and foolish handling of Dissenters by fines of 1s. a-week or 5s. a-month, was an offence against God and the Commonwealth. "This is such a shame to a Christian government, that 'tis with regret I transmit it to posterity." Nothing can be more felicitous than the gravity and earnestness with which the proposition is supported. The irony, in fact, was not altogether ironical. The main object, no doubt, was the defence of religious liberty; but this object was reached by a serious attack on those who were threatened with persecution, as well as by a sarcastic defence of those who were anxious to persecute. I shall do what I can, the writer in effect observed, to save the citadel, though I have doubts whether the garrison are worth the trouble of saving, or whether, in fact, it would not be better for them, and for everybody else, that they fell into the hands of the enemy. The genuine scorn which he felt gave that edge to his pen, and that seriousness to his air, which deceived friends and foes alike. For a long time the Sacheverells of the Church rejoiced over this vigorous defender of the faith. When they found him out, they put him in the pillory.

St John's name is to be found on the back of this, and on several other bills of doubtful fame. His position was already determined. He had become the brilliant mouthpiece of a violent faction before Godolphin and Marlborough found a place for him in the administration. At twenty-five he was made Secretary at War. He forthwith devoted himself to the duties of his office; and it is admitted on all hands, that when in office he worked assiduously. Both at this time, and afterwards when Secretary of State, he transacted an immense amount of business. He performed, in fact, nearly the whole work of the Harley Administration; he corresponded with foreign ambassadors; he wrote leaders for *The Examiner;* he directed the tactics of the party; he bore the burden of debate. His nature was extremely elastic: his temper was cheerful; he had a quick apprehension, and saw at once what was material in any business which he had on hand. "Lord Peterborough," Pope remarked, "would say very pretty and lively things in his letters, but they would be rather too gay and wandering; whereas were Lord Bolingbroke to write to an emperor or to a statesman, he would fix on that point which was the most material, would place it in the strongest and finest light, and manage it so as to make it most serviceable for his purpose." He held the office of Secretary during a stirring time,—when the conquering French army was being beaten back upon its frontier; when Blenheim and Ramillies were being won; when captured standards were being carried, amid the acclamations of the people, from Westminster to St Paul's. It was a time to test the capacity of a Secretary at War; and St John's administrative tact, his luminous expositions in Parliament, the ease with which he dealt with votes, and figures, and estimates, more than satisfied the expectations which had been raised. Even Marlborough, with unwonted generosity, admitted that he had been zealously aided by his useful colleague. He left office a perfect man of business.

He left office because the Godolphin Cabinet had become a Whig Cabinet. The policy of the administration had been essentially a war policy; and the Tories had never heartily liked the war. Godolphin found himself more eagerly supported by his political foes than by his political friends; and an alliance between the minister and the chiefs of the Opposition was gradually formed. When it had been consum-

mated, Harley and St John—the leaders of the pure Tories—withdrew from the Government. But they had sown the seeds of discord before they left. St John had always disliked the imperious Duchess of Marlborough. "Now, thanks be to God," he exclaimed, when the final rupture between the Queen and her friend took place, "that fury who broke loose to execute the vengence of Heaven on a sinful people is restrained, and the royal hand is reached out to chain up that plague." Harley had taken care to conciliate the new favourite, Mrs Masham—and Mrs Masham zealously exerted her influence with her royal mistress in Harley's behalf. The consequence was, that when the Tories, in 1708, seceded from the Government, the Queen was ready to dismiss Godolphin, and to put the white staff into the hands of his rival, at the earliest possible opportunity.

The opportunity was found in 1711. A foolish parson had preached a foolish discourse on the doctrine of non-resistance. The logical consequences of the doctrine of non-resistance were that the glorious Revolution was a rebellion, and that the crown of James II. had transmitted, *jure divino*, to his son. The Whig majority in the Commons determined to impeach the offender;[1] and articles of impeachment were accordingly prepared and carried up to the Lords. The trial lasted for many days. The Queen attended; and the Duchess of Marlborough has left an amusing account of "a scene" which occurred behind the curtain which divided the royal party from the House. The populace were roused. One assemblage proclaimed that the Church was in danger. Another assemblage denounced the tyranny of the Commons. Dr Johnson's father, who was an old bookseller, told his son that the books which had been most eagerly read in his time were the *Absalom and Achitophel* of Dryden, and the account of the Trial of Dr Sacheverell. Even to-day the trial may be read with interest. The prolonged discussions between the counsel for the accused and the managers of the impeachment are curiously characteristic. The one side essayed to prove, the other to disprove, that the doctrine of non-resistance was the doctrine

[1] Swift, in *The History of the Four Last Years of the Queen*, says, that the prosecution was urged by Godolphin, "who took fire at a nickname (Volpone) delivered by Dr Sacheverell, with great indiscretion, from the pulpit, which he applied to himself."

of the Church of England. The proceedings are as full of extracts from the writings of divines, and from the decrees of Synods, as is Mr Stephens's speech on behalf of Dr Rowland Williams. The authority of the Oxford decrees, the wretched scandal on Monmouth's scaffold, the opinions of the great dignitaries of the Church, were successively invoked. At length the House of Lords solemnly condemned Dr Sacheverell. But the majority was small, and the punishment was light. The result was hailed as a great Church triumph. It was also a great Tory triumph. Bolingbroke, indeed, expressed profound contempt for the "vain, froward, and turbulent preacher," whose frothy declamation had roused the passions of the nation; yet it was Sacheverell who brought St John into office. "You had a sermon to condemn," he wrote to Walpole, years afterwards, "and a parson to roast; for that, I think, was the decent language of the time, but—to carry on the allegory—you roasted him at so fierce a fire that you burnt yourselves." The Whigs in the Commons were profoundly chagrined. When the message from the Lords, stating that they were prepared to give judgment in the case of Dr Sacheverell, was brought down, many members spoke against demanding judgment; and the Tories, who had consistently opposed the proceedings, were on this occasion joined by several who had hitherto been most forward in the prosecution. These members held that the judgment which the Peers proposed to pronounce, and the purport of which had been allowed to escape, was ridiculously and scandalously lenient, and they thought that the Commons would best consult their dignity and evince their displeasure by declining to attend. The vote of thanks to the managers was not carried without strong opposition. A member, whose name has not been recorded, probably gave expression to the Tory exultation when he ironically remarked, that though he was against giving the managers thanks, he thought one reason in favour of doing so had not been stated. The managers should be thanked by the Commons, because it was certain that they would have thanks nowhere else. The motion was carried by a majority of fifty only; and the whole of the managers, Mr Dolben excepted, voted in the majority. The expression of popular feeling was too strong to be misconstrued. It was obvious that the Tory and Church party had the nation behind them, and would

carry the elections. Anne at once dismissed Godolphin, and called Harley and St John to office.[1]

St John was the real chief of the Harley Administration. Upon the sagacity and energy which he displayed as Secretary of State between 1711 and 1714, his reputation as an administrator, as the efficient leader of a party, must mainly depend. I am of opinion that an impartial inquiry into his conduct during those years must terminate favourably. He is entitled to a "good deliverance." If after all, indeed, we must come to the conclusion that whilst manifesting tact, skill, resolution, patience, intrepidity, he was sometimes rash, sometimes passionate, and sometimes intemperate, it may be right to remember, at the same time, that, when intrusted with the government of a great nation, St John was only thirty-two.

The policy of the Harley Administration may be easily defined. The ministers desired to terminate the war, and to organise and consolidate the party which supported them.

The war had lasted for ten years. It was called the war of the Spanish Succession; but, in so far as this country was concerned, it was a war occasioned by the impolitic courtesy which Louis the Great had, on the death of James II., paid to his son. It may be that the English nation were right to resent an act partly dictated by caprice and partly by chivalry; but ten years of blood, of desolation, and of triumph, were enough to cool the smart of a verbal impertinence. It had become clear, moreover, that the ostensible objects for which the war was entered upon could not be attained. The war had ceased to be a war of dynasties—a simple question between the eagles of Hapsburg and the lilies of France. The Spaniards, long indifferent, had at last been roused, and had identified themselves with the Bourbons. Philip was no longer an alien; he was their own king; and the reverses which they had sustained together had endeared him to them. The settlement of Spain, according to the diplomatic programme, was become a dream; and it had become so mainly by reason of the early victories which the allies had achieved on Spanish soil. But the ruling party in England would listen to no compromise. William was dead; but his energetic hatred of France had been bequeathed to the Whigs. The chief magistrate of the Dutch

[1] The best edition of the Trial of Dr Sacheverell is that published by Tonson in 1711—"printed by order of the House of Lords."

Commonwealth might well believe that animosity to the Grand Monarch was a religious duty. French armies had desolated these fertile plains; French armies had sacked these populous cities. The Dutch had never been subdued; but more than once they had been driven back into the sea. English statesmen, however, were in a different position, and an alliance between the Western powers had long been a favourite idea with the Tories. St John felt the force of these considerations, and of others not less urgent to a party leader. The war was a Whig war. It was Marlborough's war. So long as the war continued, Churchill was the virtual chief of the grand alliance, and the most powerful subject in Europe. It was hard to say to what he might not aspire. He had once, indeed, in terms somewhat too peremptory, required Anne to make him Captain-General for life. Addison's *Cato* was produced upon the stage soon after the great soldier's dismissal. Its political allusions were received by both parties with tumults of applause; but Bolingbroke adroitly turned its edge against the friends of its author. At the end of the performance he called Booth into the stage-box, and presenting him with a purse containing fifty guineas, publicly thanked him for so well defending the cause of liberty against a perpetual dictator. It was not to be wondered at, therefore, that Marlborough should not be unduly anxious to conclude a peace. But, in truth, had he not shown undue anxiety to protract the war? Had not Louis offered liberal terms of accommodation—terms which reasonable men would have willingly accepted? And had not the area of the war been recklessly extended by the Whigs, when they declared in a parliamentary resolution, that neither Spain nor the Indies should ever belong to a Bourbon? Bolingbroke had no desire to see France dismembered. On the contrary, he was anxious to be on good terms with our nearest neighbour; to eradicate national animosities; and by a commercial union, "undertaken more in the character of statesmen than of merchants," to bind the two nations firmly together. Moreover, he detested Austria. Austria was the evil genius of England. He never thought of the conduct of that family, he said, without recollecting the image of the man braiding a rope of hay, which his ass bites off at the other end. England had only a subordinate interest in the contest; England was fighting the Emperor's battles: yet England voluntarily bore the heat and burden of

the day. Entertaining these views, it cannot be matter of surprise that St John should have resolved to terminate the war.

He had many obstacles to overcome. The war was popular. The thirst for blood, long gratified, had not been slaked. It was difficult to content allies who, after Marlborough's triumphant progress, anticipated the flight of Louis and the sack of Paris. But St John's invincible resolve triumphed over every difficulty. The French envoy wrote to his master, that, in a timid and wavering council, St John was the one decisive man. His colleagues were unnerved by the delicacy of the position and the magnitude of the stake; but the Secretary did not hesitate. His intrepid spirit never quailed. The House of Lords pronounced against the peace. For some days it seemed probable that the ministry would be impeached. Swift thought that the game was up. He told Harley with grim humour that he would have the advantage of the minister; for whereas the Lord Treasurer would lose his head, *he* would only be hanged, and so take his body entire to the grave. St John alone preserved his composure. He assured the Dean that there was no cause for alarm. The Duke of Ormond, who commanded in Flanders, was ordered on no pretence to risk an engagement. A batch of Tory peers was created. The Whig majority was overawed. After many delays the peace of Utrecht was signed. St John's courageous pertinacity was rewarded by a great, if not quite untarnished, success. "It is the Lord's work," he exclaimed, echoing the words of Elizabeth, when she heard that her sister was dead; "it is the Lord's work, and it is marvellous in our eyes." "I never look back," he said long afterwards, "on this great event, past as it is, without a secret emotion of mind." The peace was not perhaps the peace which an ambitious soldier or an implacable partisan would have concluded. It did not provide for various remote eventualities. Nor did it protect the Catalans,—an ungenerous omission, for which St John, however, does not appear to have been responsible.[1] It was bitterly denounced. Its author was

[1] Bolingbroke, in fact, was urgent and pertinacious upon the point. Throughout the negotiations he had insisted on the introduction of an article as to the position of the Catalans, and near their close he wrote to Strafford, "Your Lordship will continue to insist on those terms, that the Catalans be restored to their ancient privileges, and we will carry the point."

attainted. But St John was firmly persuaded that the work was one of which any statesman might be proud. "I tell you without any gasconade," he wrote to Peterborough, "that I would rather be banished for my whole life because I helped to make the peace, than be raised to the highest honours for having obstructed it." His judgment has been signally approved. Even Lord Macaulay allows that the peace was a just and necessary peace. "We are therefore for the peace of Utrecht," he says emphatically.

St John's next object was to consolidate his party. It need not be denied that he was a thorough-going partisan. He tried hard to make Toryism supreme in the State. He left Marlborough when Marlborough became a Whig. He quarrelled with Harley when Harley's trifling imperilled the safety of his party. The violent measures of the Government against the Dissenters and the Opposition were dictated by similar motives. Anne was a Tory, but the Successor (as the Elector used to be called in the political pamphlets of the day) was attached to the opposite party. It was known that whenever he succeeded to the throne he was prepared, if permitted, to place the government of the country in the hands of "the Revolution families." It was Bolingbroke's object to deprive him of this power. It was necessary, therefore, before the accession of the Hanover dynasty, that the Tories should be made all-powerful. They must command the Church, the Parliament, and the Army. The Church had long been a hotbed of Toryism: the party had an effective majority in the Commons; the Whig majority in the Lords had been diminished by the creation of Tory peers: and at the time of Anne's death the Army was commanded by a Tory Captain-General, and extensive changes had been effected among the subordinate officials. This is the true explanation of the policy which Bolingbroke so unsparingly pursued. He was never a Jacobite at heart; but the bulk of the party which he led were obstinately disloyal. The Church contained many Sacheverells; the great Tory magnates, like Ormond and Mar, corresponded with St Germains; the county squires talked treason in their cups. St John's position, consequently, was one of peculiar nicety. He felt instinctively that the Stuarts could not be restored. Their day of grace was past. The Revolution was an accomplished fact. He desired his party to accept

it as such, and to take their stand upon principles which were consistent with success. He tried to wean them from the Stuart, and to reconcile them to the Hanoverian dynasty, by the tempting baubles of office. What Peel and Disraeli have done for the territorial party in the nineteenth century, was attempted by Bolingbroke at the beginning of the eighteenth. Had Anne lived six months longer, it is possible that his design might have succeeded. But she died, or rather ate herself to death, before the plot was ripe. The Whigs took advantage of the suspicion of disloyalty which attached to the Tory party and to its chiefs, to bring the Elector to the kingdom "in a storm," and to disable and attaint their opponents. The result might have been foreseen. The disloyal were strengthened; the loyal and neutral were disheartened. The Tories, to a man, went over to the Chevalier. Bolingbroke was forced to acquiesce. The party had escaped from his control, and, fired with anger, and thirsting for revenge, had adopted a policy of which he had always disapproved, and from which he hoped little. He himself became the minister of the Pretender. But the soundness of the instinct which had led him to despair of Jacobitism was quickly vindicated. He found that the madness with which the gods afflict those who are ready to perish, had fallen upon the ill-starred son of an ill-starred house. Bolingbroke was a Jacobite for about six months. The whole of his after-life was devoted to teaching his party the lesson which he had striven, but had failed, to teach them in the earlier part of his career, and the wisdom of which experience and suffering had so bitterly brought home to himself. "Men of the best sense," he said of the Pretender, with all the energy of conviction, "find it hard to overcome religious prejudices, which are all of the strongest; but *he* is a slave to the weakest. The rod hangs like the sword of Damocles over his head, and he trembles before his mother and his priest. What, in the name of God, can any member of the Church of England promise himself from such a character?"

Such were the tactics of the Harley Administration—tactics which could only have been carried to a successful issue by adroit and not over-scrupulous men. But most of the politicians of that age were adroit and unscrupulous. It must be added, likewise, that they were violent and cruel. The ferocity which

characterised the public life of England at the beginning of last century can scarcely be realised in these tamer times. It was not enough to dismiss a minister from office—it was necessary to impeach and attaint him. The Commons had impeached Somers and Halifax for the partition treaties. They impeached Oxford and Bolingbroke for the treaty of Utrecht. They brought Sacheverell to the bar of the Lords for preaching against rebellion; they sent Walpole to the Tower for fraud and embezzlement; even Marlborough did not feel that he was safe from their displeasure. Party feeling never ran higher in the metropolis than during the years when St John was in office. The faction which had been displaced were furious; the faction which had triumphed were implacable. The great nobles who frequented the Kit-cat bitterly resented the intrigues which had driven them from power; the country squires who met at the October clamoured for the heads of the men who had ruined the country by French wars and Dutch finance, and who had tried to ruin the Church. The spirit of faction penetrated into every society. The Tory wits and poets assailed the wits and poets of the Whigs. The Tory great ladies wore their patches in one fashion; the Whig great ladies wore theirs in another. The Tories occupied one side of the opera-house; the other was occupied by the Whigs. The Churchills and the Somersets belonged to the Opposition, and could be distinguished from the beauties who adorned the Court by their muffs, their fans, and their furbelows. The Tory Rosalind looked coldly on her gallant if he went into the wrong lobby. The Whig Juliet threw Romeo over, if Romeo persisted in attending the Treasurer's levees, or in dining with Mr Secretary St John.[1] The city was divided into two hostile camps, and quarter was neither asked nor given. Nowhere was the antagonism keener than in the

[1] See *The Examiner* (by Swift), No. 32. Addison, in No. 81 of the *Spectator*, has a charming paper on the patching question. The one party patched on the right side of the forehead, the other on the left. The censorious affirm, he says, that in some cases, the patches turn to the right or to the left, according to the principles of the man who is most in favour. "But whatever may be the motives of a few fantastical coquettes, who do not patch for the public good so much as for their own private advantage, it is certain that there are several women of honour who patch out of principle, and with an eye to the interest of their country."—June 2, 1711.

coffee-houses which the wits frequented. Nor was this to be wondered at; for the pen of every wit who could write his name had been hired by the Government or by the Opposition. Steele, Addison, and Defoe were arrayed on the left; St John, Swift, and Prior on the right of the chair. A year or two previously, when St John was living in retirement at Buklersbury, the whole town had been thrown into convulsions of laughter by Mr Isaac Bickerstaff's whimsical assaults upon Partridge, the almanac-maker. Mr Bickerstaff was an astrologer himself, but he did not believe in Partridge's astrology. Mr Bickerstaff had recently made certain astral observations, and a few of these—predictions for the ensuing year—he would now venture to communicate to the public. The first was but a trifle, he said, yet he would mention it to show how ignorant these sottish pretenders to astrology were in their own concerns. It was that Partridge should die on the 29th of March next, about eleven o'clock at night, of a raging fever. "Therefore I advise him to consider of it, and settle his affairs in time." Then came an account, in a letter to a person of honour, of the death of Mr Partridge, the almanac-maker, on the 29th instant.[1] This was followed by a pamphlet, in which Partridge explicitly denied that he was dead, and complained of the inconvenience to which he had been put by the announcement. The subject was closed by a philosophical rejoinder from Mr Bickerstaff, in which he demonstrated that

[1] The *Elegy on Partridge*,—

> "Who to the stars in pure good-will
> Does to his best look upward still,"—

is an admirable fragment of poetic *badinage*.

> "Strange an astrologer should die
> Without one wonder in the sky!
> Not one of all his crony stars
> To pay their duty at his hearse!
> No meteor, no eclipse appeared;
> No comet with a flaming beard!
> The sun has rose and gone to bed
> Just as if Partridge were not dead;
> Nor hid himself behind the moon,
> To make a dreadful night at noon.
> He at fit periods walks thro' Aries,
> Howe'er our earthly motion varies;
> And twice a-year he'll cut the equator,
> As if there had been no such matter."

it was morally impossible that Partridge could be alive. "He hath been indeed so wise to make no objection against the truth of my predictions, except in one single point relating to himself; and to demonstrate how much men are blinded by their own partiality, I do solemnly assure the reader that he is the only person from whom I have heard that objection offered; which consideration alone, I think, will take off all its weight." Swift's admirable wit never shone brighter than in these famous pleasantries. In them it is utterly without acidity—arch, cheery, and frolicsome. Yet the logic is as exact, as sinewy, as concise, as is the logic of his most elaborate treatises. He breaks Partridge upon a wheel which might move a mountain. Seldom, indeed, do we see Swift with so bright a smile on his face; the wit and the logic, indeed, are always present; but the later wit grows moody, and the ferocious energy of the logic indicates a mind that is ill at ease. Here, too, as in his other writings, his supreme simplicity is very noticeable. He wears no ornament; he is as naked as when he came from his mother's womb; simple wit and simple reason are his only weapons. But how the colourless diamond blade flashes when he wields it! Both Defoe and Swift—the two great controversialists of the time —wrote an extraordinarily homely style. But their homeliness was more persuasive than the most artful and sparkling rhetoric could have been. The one has persuaded us to believe in Robinson Crusoe; the other has persuaded us to believe in Lilliput and Brobdignag. And the choice of subject marks the difference between the men. The one created Robinson Crusoe by his hearty sympathy; the other created living Lilliputians and living Brobdignagians by his amazing logic. Both are admirably real; but the one is as true to nature as any man we meet in the street, the other is as true to nature as a mathematical figure. St John told Swift—who, about the date of the Partridge controversy, had been accounted a Whig—that the Tories were determined to have him, as he was the only man of whom they were afraid. They did well to secure him. St John's florid and fervid rhetoric for the senate, Swift's plain, direct, and homely discourse for the people, worked wonders. They persuaded the nation that the Allies were dangerous friends; that the French did not wear wooden shoes; that taxes were unpleasant; and that it was

right at all events to end the war. This was Swift's golden age. He liked to mix with the great; he liked to befriend his friends; he liked political controversy. All these good things he got during the last years of the Queen's reign. During these years, as Dr Johnson says, it must be confessed that Swift formed the political opinions of the English nation. When Anne died, the Dean was forced to quit the chosen land that flowed with milk and honey. He crossed the Channel as if he were crossing the Styx. But that wonderful weapon which he carried about with him proved as resistless in Ireland as elsewhere. Soon he came to be its foremost man. "When people ask me how I governed Ireland," Lord Cartaret wrote, "I say that I pleased Dr Swift.

'Quæsitam meritis sume superbiam.'"

But all his triumphs in Ireland would have been willingly exchanged for a single year of the reign of good Queen Anne, —"that real nursing-mother of her people," as he called her in his last will,—for a smile from Lady Masham, or a nod from Bolingbroke.

At the time when St John was raised to the peerage as Viscount Bolingbroke and Baron St John, he was probably the most conspicuous man in Europe. His popularity was unbounded. He was the hero of the October Club, and mighty flagons were quaffed in his honour. When a new masque was to be produced at the Palace, the ladies-in-waiting (of whom the youngest of "Churchill's race," the beautiful Lady Mary, Duchess of Montagu, was one) contended for the honour of dressing the handsome Secretary. He went to Paris, and in Paris he was followed by crowds, fêted by princes, and caressed by the most charming women. When he entered the theatre during the performance of one of Corneille's tragedies, the play was interrupted, and the whole house rose to receive a statesman who was only five-and-thirty, but whose fame was European. There never was a more intoxicating position; himself a wit, a minister, a scholar, a man in every way of eminent capacity; wits, ministers, poets, beauties, princes, at his feet.

It seemed, too, that he was only at the beginning of his career. The chances were, that still more splendid, still more durable fortunes awaited him. For by this time he had

learned to hate and to despise Harley. It is a mystery, indeed, how two men, so differently constituted, could have continued to be friends and colleagues for so many years. The Secretary was clear-headed, decisive, energetic, intrepid, brilliant; the Treasurer was the idlest and iciest, the most reserved, most distrustful, and most confused of men. These whisperings on the staircase, these intrigues in the lobby, these vague hints of hidden intelligence, the utter want of decision, and the dilatoriness which perpetually embarrassed the delicate game which was being played, and which could not be played without tact, finesse, readiness, and the most fearless daring, must have maddened Bolingbroke. But though their rivalries were for long (as Swift complains) the entertainment of every coffee-house, the Secretary did not finally break with his chief until he had supplanted him. The struggle was protracted. Oxford died hard. He was passionate and he was abject by turns. He clung to the hem of his mistress's robe. At the last council where the colleagues met, angry recriminations passed between them. But tears and reproaches were unavailing. That very night Oxford was dismissed.

For twenty-four hours Bolingbroke was Prime Minister of England. But his triumph was short-lived. The Queen had been present at the Council where these amenities had passed, and had been much shaken and agitated by the violence of her ministers. She declared that she could not recover the shock which she had received, and she was not mistaken. On the 1st of August 1714, Anne breathed her last. Bolingbroke felt instinctively that his career was wrecked. "The Earl of Oxford was removed on Tuesday; the Queen died on Sunday. What a world is this, and how does fortune banter us!" Yet he did not give way to craven anticipations, nor to unmanly depression. He told Swift, ten days after the event, that the blow had not stunned him. "Adieu! love me, and love me better; because, after a greater blow than most men ever felt, I keep up my spirit—am neither dejected at what is past, nor apprehensive at what is to come. *Mea virtute me involvo.*"

In the course of a few months, Bolingbroke, an attainted fugitive, was the minister of a mimic Court.[1] It would be

[1] Bolingbroke's flight to France was perhaps a blunder. It is probable, however, that, even had he remained and defended himself, the Attainder Bill would have been carried. A number of motives induced

unprofitable to follow him to Commercy; I have already alluded to the motives which induced him to enter the Pretender's service. The alliance was short-lived; and it would have been well for Bolingbroke had it never been formed. His public career, in fact, was closed. The play had been played out. He had made one fatal blunder, and he was to eat the bitter fruit during the remainder of his life. His fall was great, and, spite of his gallant bearing, never wholly repaired. The great orator never again entered the famous assembly where Somers, and Halifax, and Shrewsbury guided the fortunes of the Commonwealth.

Though Bolingbroke was not vitally injured by his fall, and though he did not become gloomy or morose, yet the position was a trying one, especially to a man of his lofty and ardent temper. The lion was chained; the wings of the eagle had been clipped. We need not wonder, therefore, that his heart should sometimes have failed him; that hope should sometimes have deserted him; that he should have restlessly paced his narrow cell, and with folded hands mused moodily upon his wrecked career. But St John's was an untameable nature. He accepted his fate with cheerfulness, if not with alacrity. He engaged in new pursuits. He busied himself with country pleasures. He read, he studied, he wrote. The statesman became a philosopher and a historian. The politician became the friend of scholars and the companion of poets.

St John had always loved the country. He had voluntarily retired from public affairs during the busiest period of his life. At that time he remained in retirement for two years,—pruning his peaches, watering his melons, hunting with the country squires, reading his Horace and his Tacitus, musing over the perplexing problems of human nature. His genius, he said, had wooed him to study and to reflect; but he had not heard the whispered invitation, "in the hurry of those passions by which I was transported." "Some calmer hours there were;

him to fly,—the violence of the faction in power, the determination of the great body of the Tories to adopt the cause of the Pretender; but perhaps a reason assigned afterwards by himself had as much weight with a man of his passionate temperament as any of the others. "I could not bear," he said, referring to the proceedings which had been taken against his old colleague and himself, "to be joined with Oxford in any case."

in them I hearkened to him. Reflection had often its turn, and the love of study and the desire of knowledge have never quite abandoned me." And now he was again at liberty to listen to the solicitation.

Lord Bolingbroke's writings may be divided into two classes—the speculative and the practical. They are of very unequal value. His nature was emotional; but he had neither the mechanic nor the creative faculties of the poet. Phillips regretted that the English Memmius's duties as Secretary at War left him no leisure to cultivate the muse. That eminently bad poet and his brethren might sport with Amaryllis in the shade, or with the tangles of Neæra's hair; but the politician was otherwise engaged.

> "St John, intent,
> So Anna's will ordains, to expedite
> His military charge no leisure finds
> To string his charming shell."

But posterity will hardly share the poetaster's regret. St John was no poet; and he had not even the mimetic power which men who are not poets sometimes have. The *Vision of Camelick* is stupid and tedious. There is all the difference in the world between that clumsy caricature and the brilliant sketches of Walpole which occur in his controversial writings. An eminent rhetorician can seldom, indeed, be converted into an effective dramatist: his nature is too intent, too absorbed, too vehement, to enable him to examine the heart and exhibit the motives of the "many-headed beast." Nor was Bolingbroke a great moralist or a great philosopher. A thinker, like Isaac Newton, is at his best in his closet. He cannot think clearly or accurately in the senate. The bustle of the streets distracts him. But Bolingbroke was cast in a different mould. Active life *steadied* his mind. His fall, though it was not fatal, did him in one way grievous harm. It turned the statesman into a recluse; and Bolingbroke was an honester man at the Foreign Office than in his hermitage. The minister did not practise histrionic tricks; he was eminently frank, simple, and unaffected. But the author had leisure to think of posterity; he put himself into becoming attitudes, and wore the player's buskin. He became—shut out from active life as he was—a historical figure before he died. This accounts for a good deal of the tawdry finery that is found in his speculative

writings, and for the character of these writings themselves. He was not an atheist; "No man," he said, quite sincerely I think, "has higher notions of the Divine omnipotence, or carries them farther than I;" but the political High-Churchman had inherited from Dryden a hatred of the priesthood. He was not a sceptic; but the philosophy of Hobbes had been popular at Court when he was a boy. Had his career not been prematurely interrupted, these early influences would have had no permanently evil effect. His mind, otherwise occupied, would have righted itself. But, in his enforced idleness, he took to studying Biblical criticism and the utilitarian philosophy; and the result was, that he assailed the outworks of Christianity and the outworks of morals. In these circumstances, it is fairer to judge Bolingbroke by his political than by his philosophical writings.

He had laboured hard to be unambitious, but he had not entirely succeeded. He had once joined in the great game, and the poison was in his veins. He averted his eyes from the senate; but he could not forget that he was an Englishman. At length he returned to the *mêlée*. He was not permitted to address his peers; but he might address his countrymen. It may be said, quite truly, that posterity is better acquainted with his character as an orator, because his lips were closed. His speeches have been preserved, because he was not allowed to deliver them. His political writings are, in fact, written orations. The orator reports himself, and instead of the dead words of our parliamentary histories, we have the words as they came from his lips—trembling with passion and stinging with scorn. They have the glow, the animation, the vehemence of consummate oratory. On this field Bolingbroke is himself again. The manly and nervous, if somewhat florid, style of these writings, contrasts favourably with the little artifices and the tawdry tricks which cling to the theologian and the moralist. Here there is no flightiness of view; but, on the contrary, a direct and eminent sagacity. All his works manifest an admirable picturesqueness and propriety of expression; but it is only when he is relating the great passages which had occurred in his own experience—only when he is dealing with war, or finance, or parliamentary corruption—only when he is threading the intricacies of Continental politics—that he ceases to be capricious and visionary,

and becomes the most practical of reasoners—enforcing his views with luminous ease and a masterly intelligence. His papers on the politics of continental Europe are specially able. He had studied the subject thoroughly; and he manifests, in these remarkable dissertations, the capacity of an administrator and the spirit of a statesman. His invective is powerful and subdued—most powerful when most subdued. But he does not engage many antagonists. John Trot could sarcastically exhort the polemical Hoadley—a prelate who wrote a political treatise or a party squib as his predecessors in old times wielded sword and mace—to study the apostolical constitutions, which enjoined a bishop not to be fond of making his court for gain, and especially to the Gentiles; not to be ready to engage in the business and disputes of the world; not to be ambitious, nor double-minded, nor doubled-tongued; not to be deceitful in conduct, nor vain and fallacious in discourse. *Quia hæc omnia Deo sunt inimica, dæmonibus grata.* But he reserved the sharpest shafts in his quiver for a nobler victim. He pursued one man with unappeasable animosity. He might write of Athens or of Rome, of Elizabeth or of Charles, but he regarded the past only as it bore upon the present, and history was ransacked to blacken one hated name. The form might be the form of a wicked minister of the Commonwealth, or of a profligate favourite of the Stuarts; but the features were the features of Walpole. His speculative writings, as I have said, are often tawdry, and the style even of his political prelections is somewhat diffuse (as commonly happens to the majority of *speakers who write*); but he becomes bitterly concise, brilliantly trenchant and direct, whenever that vehement craving for vengeance guides his pen. Walpole was his evil genius. The passionate king of the forest had been trapped by the wary hunter; and, struggle as he might, he could not break the meshes of the net. It was Walpole who drove him into exile. It was Walpole who dragged him before his peers. It was Walpole who would not suffer the most brilliant member of the peerage, and the greatest orator that England had known, to open his lips in the House of Lords. It was Walpole who had prayed that his attainder might never be reversed, and that his crimes might never be forgotten. But though the eagle could not escape, he made his talons felt. It is worth the reader's while, even to-day, to turn to

these animated orations. Let him study, in particular, the Dedication of the *Dissertation on Parties*, and the Introduction to *The Idea of a Patriot King*. The Dedication is addressed to the Right Honourable Sir Robert Walpole, Knight of the Most Noble Order of the Garter, Chancellor of the Exchequer, and First Commissioner of the Treasury. The writer did not intend, he said, to follow the ordinary style of these compositions. "I shall compare you neither to Burleigh nor to Godolphin. Let me not profane the tombs of the dead to raise altars to the living." But he dedicated the work to the minister, because he wished to explain to him the principles which it was written to enforce. The first of these was reverence for the Constitution. Reverence for the Constitution was in the political, like charity in the religious, system, a cloak to cover a multitude of sins. But he had another aim in view, one not less urgent. He designed to reinfuse the spirit of liberty, to reform the morals, and to raise the sentiments of the people. This lesson could never be repeated too often; but when they had at the head of the State "an impudent missionary of vice," it became the bounden duty of every patriot to drive it home. "Such men sin," he broke out, "against posterity as well as against their own age; and when the consequences of their crimes are over, the consequences of their example remain. I think, and every wise and honest man in generations yet unborn will think, if the history of this administration descends to blacken our annals, that the greatest iniquity of the minister, on whom the whole iniquity ought to be charged, since he has been so long in possession of the whole power, is the constant endeavour he has employed to corrupt the morals of men. I say thus generally, the morals; because he who abandons or betrays his country will abandon or betray his friend; and because he who is prevailed on to act in Parliament without any regard for truth or justice, will easily prevail on himself to act in the same manner everywhere else. A wiser and honester administration may relieve our trade from that oppression, and the public from that load of debt, under which he has industriously kept it. A wiser administration may draw us back to our former credit and influence abroad, from that state of contempt into which we are sunk among all our neighbours. But will the minds of men, which this minister has narrowed to personal regard

alone—will their views which he has confined to the present moment, *as if nations were mortal like the men who compose them, and Britain was to perish with her degenerate children*—will these, I say, be so easily or so soon enlarged?" And then the writer, with a touch of haughty pathos, reverted to his own crippled condition. "I speak as if I could take my share in these glorious efforts. Neither shall I recall my words. Stripped of the rights of a British subject—of all except the meanest of them, that of inheriting—I remember that I am a Briton still. I apply to myself what I have read in Seneca: *Officia ci civis amiserit, hominis exerceat.*" He had been informed, indeed, that the minister intended to prosecute him. But the threat did not disturb him. He might, indeed, fall a victim to power, but truth and reason, and the cause of liberty, would fall with him; and he who was buried in their ruins was happier than he who survived them. "Weary of the world, determined and prepared to retire wholly from it, he would surely suspend his retreat to face the persecution; and whatever his persecutors might imagine, they would erect a sort of triumphal arch to the man they hated. He would leave the world with more honour than they would remain in it. By suffering in defence of the constitution of his country, they who had thought favourably of him would think that he had crowned the good, and they who had entertained prejudices against him that he atoned for the ill which had been imputed to him. Such different judgments you know, sir, will attend every man's character who acts on our divided stage; and he is happy who can reconcile them so nearly. It never happens that there is a man of whom all speak well; *as it rarely, very rarely, happens that there is a man of whom all speak ill, except those who are hired to speak well.*" Junius must have read these writings attentively. St. John's invective is more florid and copious, that of Junius more concise and measured; but the art with which Junius works a period up to its epigram—the sting in the wasp's tail—and his air of haughty reserve and arrogant humility, were undoubtedly borrowed from Bolingbroke.

Walpole had "a long run of luck." It is difficult to describe that eminently successful career by a phrase more suited to the dignity of history. He played his hand carefully, no doubt; but even caution was hardly required, for his cards were all trumps. "What a star has our minister!" his

rival could not help exclaiming, as, one by one, the gartered commoner threw the honours which fortune had so bountifully dealt him. What was the secret of this success? "Honest Robin," with his rosy complexion, with his bull-neck, with his burly figure, who blushed painfully when spoken to, who stammered when he spoke, and who broke down entirely when he first attempted to address the House, was liker the son of a yeoman than the son of a gentleman. His intellectual gifts and acquirements were mediocre. He was probably the most ignorant Prime Minister who ever governed England. He was no scholar: he never opened a volume of history; he knew nothing of Continental politics. It was said that, in his hours of leisure or of pleasure, he could "smile without art, and win without a bribe;" but even in private his manners were boisterous and his tastes rude. Nor can it be alleged that his public course was guided by lofty or generous motives; his most eloquent apologist can only venture to suggest that he sometimes served his country, when it was no longer possible to serve himself. But he was sturdy, dogged; he did not know what fear meant; he had an absolute contempt for danger, and an unquenchable thirst for power, which he was resolved to gratify. The Revolution did not merely substitute William for James: it dethroned the King of England. The Tudors and the Stuarts had been real rulers. Even Charles II., though weak and vicious, had been in this sense "every inch a king." He exercised his own will; during the contests upon the Exclusion Bill he was his own minister; his subjects liked him because he was profuse and forgiving; and they obeyed him because he had been "anointed" to rule over them. But there was nothing to love about the Dutchman. The veneration that had attended, the divinity that had hedged, the successors of the Confessor, did not survive the flight of James II. The new men were chief magistrates, who exercised their power through ministers. Bursts of popular passion temporarily drove these ministers out of office, but for sixty or seventy years the heads of the families who had changed the succession governed England. This oligarchy adopted Walpole. He was the nominee of the Revolution families; he became their master. Never was there a more absolute tyrant. With the rank and file acting steadily behind his bench, he dismissed, he disgraced, he ostracised the leaders of the party. Whenever a

Whig showed that he was able, or zealous, or ambitious, the minister made a present of him to the Opposition. The Opposition comprised the eloquence, the administrative capacity, the constitutional learning of Parliament; the member for Castle Rising was the Government. He was ultimately driven from office; but the struggle was bitter and protracted. It was during this long Walpolean battle that Bolingbroke's fiery philippics appeared in the columns of the *Craftsman*. Pulteney was the parliamentary, Bolingbroke the literary, leader of the Opposition. A new race of controversialists had arisen since Defoe had stood in the pillory, and Swift had been condemned by the Lords:—

> "St John, as well as Pulteney, knows
> That I had some repute for prose;
> And, till they drove me out of date,
> Could maul a Minister of State."

Walpole, so long as he could keep his place, took good-naturedly a vast deal of mauling; but at last, in 1742, his imperturbable good nature and his invincible good fortune deserted him. He left that field of battle which none leave as victors. A minister never retires until he is defeated.[1]

[1] Sir Robert Peel has written an interesting, and, looking to the cautious and politic temperament of both statesmen, highly characteristic defence of Walpole. Lord Mahon (now Earl Stanhope) had submitted the original estimate which he had formed of Walpole to Sir Robert's revision; and this defence was the reply. We cannot say that we think it contains any conclusive answer to the charges which have been preferred against George I.'s minister. He asks, for instance, why, if Walpole did really corrupt his age, the Select Committee, appointed after his fall to inquire into his conduct, produced no details of the bribery practised by him? Several reasons may be assigned. Proof of corruption is always attended with extreme difficulty, especially when it is not a *constituency* but a *representative*, who is bribed. The bribery of a member of Parliament is an occult delinquency, where *penuria testium* is to be expected. Moreover, a committee of Walpole's House of Commons would be apt to regard this delinquency with tenderness,—as lying, in fact, beyond the range of their commission. To prove that the minister had followed an ancient and laudable custom (as they, no doubt, considered it), would not have supplied materials for an impeachment, and might have formed an inconvenient precedent: unless they could discover and denounce distinct acts of fraud, such as, in the notions of the time, touched his honour as a gentleman, they might as well let the investigation drop. Sir Robert Peel, indeed,

The literary Toryism of the eighteenth century reflected the genius of Bolingbroke; and Bolingbroke's Toryism was the fruit of his position. The Revolution families kept Walpole in power; Bolingbroke denounced the oligarchy. The oligarchy bribed unscrupulously; Bolingbroke denounced corruption. The oligarchy governed the electoral body; Bolingbroke advocated parliamentary freedom. The oligarchy made the king a cipher; Bolingbroke essayed to unite the people and the king. His modern critics admit the extent and virulence of the disease, but they ridicule the remedies which he proposed. "Bolingbroke," Lord Macaulay observed, "who was the ablest and the most vehement of those who raised the clamour against corruption, had no better remedy to propose than that the royal prerogative should be strengthened." This is scarcely a

powerfully enforces the difficulty which at the outset meets Walpole's detractors. "There must surely have been something very extraordinary in the character and powers of that man, who, being the son of a private gentleman, without any advantage from a distinguished name, or services of illustrious ancestors, was Prime Minister of England amid great public difficulties for a period of twenty years—who, mainly by his personal exertions, contributed to establish and confirm, without severity or bloodshed, a new and unpopular dynasty—who tolerated no competitor for power—who rebuked the genius of every adversary." This is well put; but cannot we speak of the Pelhams in almost the same terms? and no historian has ventured to assert that the Pelhams were men of extraordinary powers and character. Walpole's early and steady progress to parliamentary supremacy, in spite of his oratorical failures, is undoubtedly a curious fact—not to be easily explained—best perhaps to be explained when we recollect that at the time few eminent Whig speakers sat in the House of Commons. The field was, consequently, comparatively open; and the man who offered his services to the party possessed moral qualities which, in the circumstances of the Whigs, were even more desirable than high intellectual accomplishments—unwearied patience and a dauntless courage. When he had once become their accepted leader, and acquired the right to direct as he willed the complex machinery which a powerful connection had organised, his way was cleared. Nor can it be denied that the age—an age of consolidation, to which repose was essential—needed a man of Walpole's stamp—a man cautious, moderate, politic, merciful, who, so long as he held the seals, was content to leave the smouldering embers of civil strife to die out undisturbed, and in a spirit of indolent good-humour "let bygones be bygones." Earl Stanhope's little volume of *Miscellanies* contains a few scraps of great interest, and throws not a little light on two men of very different temper—Sir Robert Peel and Lord Macaulay.

fair statement of the case. The *Patriot King* is perhaps the least sincere of Bolingbroke's political writings. It was intended as a compliment to Prince Frederick, and it is undoubtedly a very fine and courtly compliment. But a man's everyday manners are not to be learned from the bow which he makes to his prince. We must look elsewhere for the remedies approved and sanctioned by the practical statesman; and, curiously enough, the language used by Bolingbroke in many passages is identical with that used by his critic. Lord Macaulay thought that parliamentary publicity and parliamentary emancipation were needed; and Lord Bolingbroke declared that, until the independency of the Parliament and the uninfluenced and uninfluenceable freedom of elections were effectively secured, there could be no check upon a corrupt and profligate minister. It is, of course, quite true, at the same time, that he desired to diminish the influence of the oligarchy, and to increase the influence of the Crown; and that he proposed to effect this object by uniting the people and the king. The idea was not a very wise idea, perhaps; but it was not an impracticable one, and cannot be ridiculed as such. It was realised many years later, when Pitt, the minister of the Crown and the minister of the middle classes—the representative of royalty and the representative of commerce and finance—defeated the Coalition.

Nor was Bolingbroke's domestic life, in these later years, without its consolations. He had married, when abroad, a woman who loved him with a pure love, and to whom he was tenderly devoted. A circle of great friends gathered about him. So long as the English language lasts, the names of the men who composed that society will be remembered with pride and with gratitude. Prior, indeed, had been laid in Westminster Abbey. Swift was an exile,—"remote from St John, Pope, and Gay." The Dean had won for himself wide fame, an immense love, across the Channel; but he always regarded Ireland as his place of banishment, and he continued to look back to England, as Ovid from the shores of the Euxine looked back to Rome. Letters arrived at times from the moody satirist; and occasionally he came himself—*cum Zephyris et hirundine prima*. Bolingbroke could venture to say that his fall had not broken his heart. "I am sometimes gay, but I am never sad." But the Dean was soured. Pope, when he thought of the world,

was to give it one more lash at his request. He was daily losing friends, and neither seeking nor getting others. He could not even write to St John without a twinge of pain. "My lord, I hate and love to write to you; it gives me pleasure and kills me with melancholy." But though Swift and Prior were absent, there was no lack of good company. The friendship which had been begun at La Source was renewed at Dawley. Voltaire visited the eminent Englishman, in whom he had found all the learning of England and all the politeness of France,—the eminent statesman who, though all his life immersed in pleasure and in business, had found time for learning everything and for retaining everything. Pope at Twickenham, and Lord Berkeley at Cranford, were his near neighbours. Swift had introduced Pope to St John during the great days of Queen Anne, and the love of the Tory poet for the Tory peer never abated nor grew slack. Sir William Wyndham, his faithful follower and his truest friend, the "dear Willie" of a correspondence which lasted for thirty years; the wise and generous Marchmount; Gay, helpless and innocent and charming as a child; Murray, as yet better known as a jester than as a jurist; the tender and pure-minded Arbuthnot; the lean, brilliant, and vagrant Peterborough, "who goes to every climate, and never stays in any,"—were among his intimates. At a later period came the youthful William Pitt, barely out of his teens, but even in his teens haughty, arrogant, and imperious.

Lord Macaulay, who was captivated by Addison, did not love the Dawley and Twickenham society. Bolingbroke was "a brilliant knave;" Pope "a malignant elf." It must be admitted that few of these men were quite sound "in wind and limb." There were cracks in the mirror. Pope was diseased, Swift went mad, Bolingbroke was insanely ambitious, Peterborough was a knight-errant, and Gay a child. Against Pope, in particular, many evil things may be, and have been, said. The deformed and decrepit poet had a grudge against the world. The feelings of this "Homer in a nutshell" were easily hurt, and easily fired. He was keenly alive to his own infirmities. He resented his malformation. He once or twice tries to allude lightly, and by the by, to "the libelled person and the pictured shape;" but the hand winces and the flesh quivers as he writes. There is a smile on the shrunken face,

but the pain is intense. There is mockery in the voice, but the excessive bitterness is fitter for tears than for laughter.

> "Go on, obliging creatures! make me see
> All that disgraced my betters met in me.
> Say for my comfort, languishing in bed,
> 'Just so immortal Maro held his head;'
> And when I die, be sure you let me know
> Great Homer died three thousand years ago."

He affects to put aside the comparison, and to reject the balm; yet it is obvious that he is not sorry to remind his readers that he is not the first great man to whom nature has proved unkind. In the heart of such a man many jealous and angry passions must have lodged. Sometimes he was bowed down by anguish; sometimes he was fiercely excited. And, undoubtedly, there was a *twist* in his mind as in his body. Pope's was, in many aspects, a lofty and generous nature. He was of an intrepid disposition. He could brave power. Let the cowards bully him if they dared! He loved his friends. Yet he was sometimes base. He was familiar with the stealthy and secret arts with which nature arms the weaker animals. Sometimes he practised these arts without excuse, necessity, or provocation. A purposeless fraud turned the love of Bolingbroke into hatred. It was natural, besides, that such a man should be jealous of his rivals. Not that he wanted generosity. If he hated furiously, he worshipped passionately. He required an idol before which he could bow down and offer up incense—the incense of immortal adulation. For many years Bolingbroke was the idol before which this devotee prostrated himself. The restless, resolute, intriguing, proscribed Jacobite peer was a man in the perfection of manly beauty and vigour; yet in some respects, mental and physical, he bore a curious resemblance to the sickly poet. Such a man attracted and subjugated Pope; but Bolingbroke was one in a thousand, and the poet was more often repelled than attracted by men of letters. The *Dunciad* is the imperishable monument of his animosities. In all the literature of that age "no whiter page than Addison's remains;" yet even Addison he cruelly maltreated. It may be doubted whether a subsequent generation will recognise the great humane humorist, except as he appears in Pope's cruelly skilful lines. Already the 'Spectator's' mild features begin to grow indistinct, and

the formidable shade of Atticus usurps his place. The copy, of course, bears a likeness to the original; and though the wrinkles and crows'-feet obtain malicious prominence, yet are they drawn with exquisite delicacy, and a touch of surprising lightness and dexterous reserve. Nor need we wonder that Pope and Addison could not continue friends. The temperance of Addison's character would not exercise a soothing influence over Pope's vehement temper. We can fancy that the exquisite urbanity which no provocation could disturb must have often exasperated the "formidable cripple" past endurance.

Whatever their dispositions were, these men undoubtedly spoke to and of each other, and of the world, nobly. It is possible that they were actors, and that ordinary men and women do not use the language they used; but then we do not require the Kembles and Siddonses of the stage to be entirely natural even in private, and a certain high-bred and stately politeness attaches to the gentlemen of the old school. This is a slovenly generation; but our grandfathers were punctilious about the niceties of dress and manners. Of all these courtly friends, Pope best understood the rhetoric of flattery. His happy adulation has never been matched. The names, so aptly, so artfully introduced into his verse, sparkle like gems in a translucent stream. The poem adorns the name, and the name adds a lustre to the poem. Godolphin, Wyndham, Pulteney, Marchmount, Walpole, Somers, Halifax, Chesterfield, Argyle, Murray, Atterbury, Addison, Gay, Swift, Harley, St John,—there is hardly a wit, or poet, or statesman of the age, who has not a niche in that Pantheon. Among the brilliant group, however, two names are dwelt upon with peculiar and recurring fondness. The first of these was that of a briefless barrister, very witty, very idle, and very needy when Pope first singled him out. At that time the penniless Scotchman was little known in Westminster Hall, and the grave sergeants who stunned the Rolls or lulled the Exchequer "shook their heads at Murray as a wit." He became a great lawyer, he led the House of Commons, he is rightly regarded as the most eminent jurist who ever adorned the English bench; but Lord Mansfield's forensic and judicial triumphs are not his surest titles to immortality. He lives in imperishable poetry, and almost as imperishable prose. He is embalmed in the eulogy of Pope, and in the invective of Junius. All the resources of

our language have been employed to brighten and blacken his fame. The Great Unknown closed a famous epistle by imploring Lord Camden to save his country, and to impeach a wicked judge. "Thus far I have done my duty in endeavouring to bring him to punishment. But mine is an inferior ministerial office in the temple of Justice; I have bound the victim and dragged him to the altar." What a contrast between these fiery epigrams and the dulcet notes which had welcomed the young and sprightly lawyer—the musical strains which remind us of the vanity of life in words rich with the hues and blazoned with the pomp of earth—the subtle homage which borrowed its finest plume from the ignominy of death and the perishableness of mortal honours:—

> "Conspicuous scene! another yet is nigh,
> More silent far, where kings and poets lie;
> Where Murray—long enough his country's pride—
> Shall be no more than Tully or than Hyde!"

The one name was Murray's, the other was St John's. Murray was his pupil; St John was his master. Pope never wearied of worshipping his "guide, philosopher, and friend." They had communed together, apart from "low ambition and the pride of kings," of the noblest subjects which can employ and exalt the intellect. St John had taught him to fall with dignity, to rise with temper. He had taught him, by his converse, happily to steer from grave to gay, from lively to severe. He had taught him to despise the caprices of fortune, and truly to estimate the baubles of greatness. He had taught him that love, and honour, and virtue, and troops of friends, are independent of the frowns or of the caresses of the court:—

> "Great without title; without fortune, bless'd;
> Rich, even when plundered; honoured, while oppress'd;
> Loved without youth, and followed without power;
> At home, though exiled; free, though in the Tower."

He looked back with pardonable complacency on the hours which they had spent together; and the quaint little grotto at Twickenham, where he had entertained statesmen, and poets, and warriors; where Peterborough had trimmed his vines, and St John mingled with the friendly bowl the feast of reason and the flow of soul, became a sacred place. "Lo! the Egerian

grot." And he looked forward with ardent confidence to the day when the name of Bolingbroke would be a cherished possession among Englishmen, when the sons of those who had assailed the patriot statesman "would blush to think their fathers were thy foes," and when *his* little bark, in the wake of that high admiral, might

> "Pursue the triumph and partake the gale."

Such was "the even of a tempestuous day." But as the shadows lengthened, St John grew very lonely. "I go into my own country," he said sadly, but the style is still vivid and richly pictorial, "as if I went into a strange country, and shall inhabit my own house as if I lodged in an inn." He was crippled by gout. His wife was dying. Swift had died in the '45; Pope during the spring of the immediately preceding year. Bolingbroke had stood by the deathbed of the great English poet, and had pressed the hand of his dearest friend as he died. "I have known him these thirty years," he said to Spence, as they stood together at the bedside, "and value myself more for that man's love than——" here the narrator interposes, "St John sank his head, and lost his voice in tears." "The sob which finishes the epitaph," Mr Thackeray observes, "is finer than words. It is the cloak thrown over the father's face in the famous Greek picture, which hides the grief and heightens it." So St John was left alone to drink the bitter dregs of the cup. The solitary was not always serene. Trifles irritated him—as they are apt to irritate men of a sensitive and highly refined organisation. He had always, as Chesterfield says, resented the little inadvertencies of human nature; an over-roasted leg of mutton "would strangely disturb and ruffle his temper;" and Pope had complained that, though his friend never rebuked him for his follies and vanities, he "would hang his head to see a seam awry." We might wish that one or two incidents in those closing years could be blotted out; but one has not the heart to be angry with the lonely old giant, who had been so long chained to his rock, so sorely afflicted by the gods, so often scarred by the thunder and beaten by the waves, but who yet persevered in his haughty defiance, and whose heart had not died within him. The end, however, was at hand. An old cancerous humour in

the jaw spread rapidly. A quack undertook to remove it; but the operation gave the sufferer intense pain, and only quickened the progress of the malady. Chesterfield, his warmest friend in these last days, paid him a farewell visit. "God," said the dying man, "who placed me here, will do what He pleases with me hereafter; and He knows best what to do. May he bless you!" He died on the 12th of December 1751.

FROM

CHATHAM TO CANNING.

1735 TO 1827.

—o—

TO many of us history is mainly interesting in so far as it brings the lessons of the past to bear upon the problems of the present; and it is difficult to look through the annals of the English Parliament without feeling that party government becomes wellnigh impossible when burning questions and heroic measures are made the order of the day. The Constitution cannot stand the strain of a profound antipathy. There is not room within the limits of our parliamentary system for the conflict of Roundhead and Cavalier. There are some vital and fundamental questions on which, if the minority are beaten, they must try other weapons than those of argument. The wise party leader is always unwilling to raise these grave issues. He knows by instinct how far he can safely go without risk of civil war. "That is an act," said the sagacious Horace Walpole on one occasion, "*of deeper dye than I like in politics.*" The keen distrust with which our political Idealists are regarded, is mainly due to the feeling that they do not sufficiently recognise

the force of such prudential restraints. No one can tell when that fine frenzy, that ecstatic enthusiasm, that imperious caprice, that fanatical ardour, may carry them across the border line. The profound gulf which separates our political parties at the present moment is their work. While they have raised a whole host of questions which touch the very core of the Constitution, it is in Ireland that the consequences of making politics a war *à outrance* are most visibly disastrous. *There* the fat has been thrown into the fire with a vengeance. At all times, if history can be trusted, a thin partition separates order from anarchy, cosmos from chaos. The political Idealist has never realised how thin this partition is,—how delicate and easily wounded is the mechanism of civilisation. To him the fact that all the explosive anarchic forces which exist in the most polished community are kept within bounds by a few hundred unarmed policemen, is not a marvel, as to those of us who know what our own society was only a century or two ago, it must always be. It is a mischievous delusion to imagine that it is possible to play fast and loose with these anarchic forces. The ocean of barbarism can be kept back only by such constant watchfulness as the Dutchman bestows upon his dykes. The sentiment of Order in a nation is of slow and difficult growth. We talk of the majesty of the law; but, resting as it ultimately does in a free country on immaterial sanctions, the majesty of the law is only a devout imagination. If disorder and violence are permitted to make head for a month, for a week, for a day, its inviolate sacredness is gone. "Force is no remedy;" which is a bitter truism;—if force be too long delayed. The law has been allowed to lose its majesty; and when, through the folly or the feebleness of an infatuated ruler, the divinity that hedges its ministers is withdrawn, it is found too late that the brute force

of batons and bayonets is a sorry substitute for the august symbols that appealed to the imagination. But the political Idealist, who weaves his web in the solitude of his closet, and who does not know, what Thomas Hobbes knew so well, that "WORDS are wise men's counters; they do but reckon with them; but they are the money of fools;" fancies that we can loose the dogs of anarchy, and then whistle them back at our pleasure. Will they come when we call on them? Not they. The brutes have tasted blood, and all the savagery of the blood-hound is ablaze.

What will come of the anarchic state into which we have fallen it is indeed hard to say. Yet, on one point, at least, history is explicit,—the disease which proves fatal to the stability of a State is seldom recognised as such at the moment. The contemporary observer considers it an accidental disturbance of the system which can be quickly repaired; the historian sees that it was the turning-point in the life of the nation from which recovery was impossible. Whether he can precisely explain why it should have led to utter national ruin and discomfiture is another matter; but, in point of fact, the road afterwards was all down-hill. And it may be safely affirmed that of all the diseases which can affect the body politic, the decay of the sense of order and of loyal obedience to law is one of the most virulent and immedicable.

The great party leaders who have reflected most faithfully the genius of the English monarchy did not belong to the idealistic school. To Disraeli, Macaulay, Palmerston, Canning, Pitt, Shelburne, Chatham, the preservation of order was the first duty of government. To them the monarchy was not a political theory, but a venerable tradition, an immense fact. They did not bring into the field of practical politics the intellectual intolerance of

the schoolmen. They were men of the world as well as men of genius. Abstract truth and the exactness of science might be very good things in their way; but they were content to take England as they found it. The age of chivalry is dead: so is the age of oratory,—

> "Athos and Ida with a dashing sea
> Of eloquence between."

Yet even if anything like true party life—a life strenuous but restrained—is ceasing to be possible among us, the fortunes of the great statesmen who have been identified with its most characteristic developments, cannot cease to have a keen interest for Englishmen.

The Great Commoner is the most imposing figure which the last century produced. His shadow stretches across it like the shadow of a colossus. Chatham was by no means, indeed, a completely furnished or well-balanced statesman. A certain splendour and slovenliness mingle in his character. His sister used to say that her brother knew nothing accurately except the *Faery Queen*. But a politician who in the eighteenth century could muse with delight over the purest and most ethereal work of the English imagination, probably stood very much alone among his contemporaries, and must have owned certain rare and lofty virtues, and a generous and vivid genius. What his speeches were can now be at best vaguely guessed; but even yet these "shreds of unconnected eloquence" remain in their way unrivalled. They are struck with the authentic fire of the imagination—of the imagination in the full sweep of excited and eloquent emotion. Half-a-dozen of his "luminous sentences" are almost all that continue notable to us in fifty years of political history. They are the masterful words of a great man—haughty and arrogant words often—but haughty and arrogant because the speaker, in the pride of his integrity, scorned all meanness, and baseness, and trickery. "I come not here armed at all points with law cases and Acts of Parliament, *with the statute-book doubled down in dogs'-ears, to defend the*

cause of liberty," he exclaimed, with fine scorn, in answer to Grenville's argument on our right to tax the colonies. "Such are your well-known characters and abilities," he said, addressing the Government of Lord North, "that sure I am that any plan of reconciliation, however moderate, wise, and feasible, must fail in your hands. Who, then, can wonder that you should put a negative on any measure which must annihilate your power, deprive you of your emoluments, and *at once reduce you to that state of insignificance for which God and nature designed you?*" Again, when Lord Rockingham's Administration solicited his support—"Pardon me, gentlemen," he said, bowing to them with that reserved and haughty courtesy with which, more than with any other characteristic of manner, we identify him, "confidence is a plant of slow growth in an aged bosom." Most of the speeches he made in defence of the revolted colonists are grand and vehement. "As an Englishman by birth and principle, I recognise to the Americans their supreme inalienable right to their property—a right which they are justified to defend till the last extremity. To maintain this principle is the common cause of the Whigs on the other side of the Atlantic and on this. 'Tis liberty to liberty engaged,' that they will defend themselves, their families, and their country. *In this cause they are immovably allied; it is the alliance of God and nature — immutable, eternal—fixed as the firmament of heaven.*" The assurance which he entertained of our ultimate failure was pressed home with the earnestness of supreme conviction. "I say we must necessarily undo these violent oppressive acts; *they must be repealed; you will repeal them; I pledge myself for it, that you will in the end repeal them; I stake my reputation on it; I will consent to be taken for an idiot if they are not finally repealed!*" Yet he would not consent to compromise the Imperial authority, nor agree to Franklin's proposal, that the King's troops should not be quartered in America without the consent of the provincial Legislatures; and he enshrined his argument in a noble metaphor. "Such a condition," he exclaimed, "plucks the master-feather from the eagle's wing."[1]

[1] In the *Greville Memoirs* there is an anecdote which I do not remember to have seen elsewhere:—

"Once in the House of Lords, on a debate during the American War, he said he hoped the King might be awakened from his slumbers.

Yet Lord Chatham's career, judged of by the ordinary criterion of Ministerial success, may be said to have comparatively failed. He was far oftener in opposition than in office: his own Ministry was feeble: on many of the most important questions of the day the King and the nation refused to sanction his policy. But Chatham, during the four years between 1757 and 1761, when with splendid firmness and sagacity he conducted the great war against France, did what no other statesman of his age did, or could have done. For seventy years England had been a nation divided against itself. The affections of one-half of the people were fixed upon an exiled house —*sæva Pelopis domus.* The spirit of active rebellion had been at length extinguished, but the old animosities still burnt on; and the winning party itself did not feel very proud of the throne it had gained for an alien and unpopular dynasty. It was Chatham who revived the old national feeling. He made the Englishman again proud of his country. He recalled the sense of patriotism, of national union, of a combined corporate life. The restoration of that spirit of loyal obedience and dutiful attachment to the State, without which, as Burke eloquently said, "Your army would be a base rabble, and your navy nothing but rotten timber," was directly due to the genius and character of Lord Chatham. He was a strong man, and he communicated his strong manhood to the nation. The picture of the Great Minister wielding the thunderbolts of war, and again, as in the old times, vindicating the authority of the English name, fired the imagination of the people, and welded them together as one man. He found England divided and dispirited; he left it united and exultant.

As the veteran gladiator was borne from the arena, two youthful athletes appeared upon it—Charles James Fox and William Pitt. Lady Holland writes to her husband in 1767, —"I have been this morning with Lady Hester Pitt, and there is little William Pitt, now eight years old, and really

There was a cry of 'Order! Order!' 'Order, my Lords!' burst out Chatham; 'I have not been disorderly, but I will be disorderly. I repeat again, I hope that his Majesty may be awakened from his slumbers, but that he may be awakened by such an awful apparition as that which drew King Priam's curtains in the dead of the night, and told him of the conflagration of his empire.'"—Vol. iii. 132.

the cleverest child I ever saw, and brought up so strictly and so proper in his behaviour, that—mark my words—that little boy will be a thorn in Charles's side as long as he lives." A curious womanly intuition fulfilled to the letter! William Pitt was indeed a thorn in Fox's side as long as he lived.

It has of late become customary with certain writers to depreciate the services and the wisdom of Pitt; they admit, indeed, that he was a stately Minister, gifted with copious and weighty eloquence; but they assert that he cannot be regarded as a sound or sagacious leader, and they see in his unrivalled Parliamentary success only an accumulation of fortunate accidents. On the other hand, it is asserted, in the same quarter, that Fox, in this very capacity, was eminently distinguished; and that the reason why his labours were so seldom crowned with official recognition, is to be traced to a combination of disastrous fatalities, over which the most forecasting prudence could have exercised no control. This estimate appears to me singularly unhappy. Pitt was "a thorn" in Fox's side, no doubt: but he was so because the Whig leader recklessly left his advances open and unguarded. Fox's attacks upon Pitt always recoiled without effect: the Whig leader's impulsive and desultory genius was no match for the cool and prescient sagacity of the Minister. Fox's career was a failure: Pitt's, from the very beginning, a splendid success. The prolonged authority of the son of Chatham was not an accident. What is the explanation? The nation admired the lavish gifts of the one; but it had confidence in the other. It is the triumph of *character*.

A brief survey will make this clear.

Neither the public nor the private character of Fox was calculated to inspire the people with confidence.

His private life was against him. He possessed, indeed, many amiable social qualities—warm affections, a placable and forgiving disposition, a sweet and winning temper which nothing could sour. He was thus immensely popular among his associates. But his reputation with the country was bad; and the reputation was not unjustified. His early career was profligate; and even his connection with Mrs Armistead[1]—which probably did much to steady him—was foreign to the feelings of a strictly

[1] Mrs Armistead afterwards became Mrs Fox.

moral people. His father introduced him to the gaming-table at Spa before he was fourteen: and he quickly became one of the most fierce and reckless gamblers in a gambling age. The purchase of the annuities, which he had granted to cover his losses at play, cost Lord Holland more than a hundred and forty thousand pounds. As he mixed much in society the details of his "interior" life were well known to the public. He rose late, and before he had quitted his bedroom in St James's Street was surrounded by a group of pleasant, witty, and accomplished disciples. Many men who were very famous then, and some who will be very famous for ever, attended these matutinal levees. Wrapped in a "foul linen night-gown" that only partially concealed "his black and bristly person," his hair matted, and his hands unwashed, the profligate dictator marshalled the forces of the Opposition, and devised the tactics of the campaign. The day he spent at Newmarket—in the evening he assailed the Minister—the night was consumed at Almack's. This celebrated club in Pall Mall had been established by himself; and within its walls, their faces muffled, their laced ruffles protected with leather straps "such as footmen wear," the youthful aristocracy of England scattered, with a cast of the dice, the hoarded savings of centuries. Long after daybreak the Whig leader once more landed in St James's Street—that is, when he could reach home, and it was not necessary to leave him under the supper-table in what Grattan called Fox's *negligent grandeur!* This was terrific work—only a most vigorous and elastic constitution could have stood it. Fox, physically and intellectually, braved it with splendid impunity: to his associates, the wild dissipation seemed only to add a fresher charm to his eloquence, and a keener point to his wit; but at the same time it effectually alienated the mass of the people from him.

Nor was his public life more reassuring. The first Lord Holland was utterly destitute of principle. According to his creed every patriot had his price, and every vote in the House of Commons could be bought. Endowed, like his son, with warm affections, and a serene and equable temper which he preserved to the last—("If Mr Selwyn calls again," he said to his servant when he was dying, "let him in: if I am alive I shall be very glad to see him; and if I am dead, he will be very glad to see me")—he was yet utterly untrustworthy.

The political latitudinarianism of the father was supposed to have descended to the son. The impression was false indeed; for Fox, especially in later life, had many strong and even vehement convictions. But his conduct undoubtedly often gave a colour to the imputation; and he suffered in consequence.

Gibbon has asserted that Fox was a great and sagacious leader,—"Fox, who, in the conduct of a party, approved himself equal to the conduct of an empire." The words were written towards the close of the historian's life, and when ample materials for judgment were beside him. But surely no man can be regarded as a great chief whose tactics alienate his party and the people; and at the time when Gibbon wrote, the nation had lost all confidence in the wisdom and capacity of the Whig leaders, and the Whig party was divided against itself. Fox was looked upon as a reckless *débauché* who spent his days and nights in drinking and gambling with the Prince of Wales. Sheridan's want of application and steadiness was universally acknowledged, and had been piquantly illustrated. "No applications"—a notice, it was said, stuck on the door of his office during the time he was Secretary to the Treasury, announced—"no applications can be received here on Wednesdays, nor any business done during the remainder of the week." And when the party, with its traditional exclusiveness, could find no place for Burke in his own Administration, it seemed tacitly to sanction the popular impression that his vast outlines of domestic and imperial reform could not be filled in. Its recent manœuvres, moreover, had created an impression that the men were not only incompetent but unprincipled. Office was regarded as the sole object of their mercenary ambition. The tactics of the Opposition—from a Whig point of view especially—were certainly for many years particularly infelicitous. The junction with Lord North, the conflict of 1784, the question of the Regency, and the French Revolution, were the principal events that took place between 1782 and 1792. What was Fox's conduct in relation to these events? Was it consistent with the constitutional principles which he advocated, or with his position as the leader of the Whig party—the party calling itself the popular? The junction with an ultra-Tory like Lord North was censured by his personal friends as "an unnatural alliance," and he himself admitted that it was "a measure which only success could

justify." In 1784 the conflict was one substantially between the Parliament and the people. The right to an ultimate verdict vested in the people was surely a doctrine which no Whig should have controverted. But this right Fox passionately denied. Again, in 1788, on the question of the Regency, he maintained that the Prince of Wales was invested with an inherent authority which did not require the sanction or recognition of either House of Parliament. Was the patrimonial title which he claimed for the Prince a claim which a sound Whig, nourished on the traditions of the Revolution settlement, would have voluntarily recognised? Finally, his conduct in regard to the French Revolution and the French war was characterised by a reckless disregard of the responsibilities that office imposes on a leader. I do not mean to question his sincerity—in so far as sincerity is possible to a man without any deeply grounded root of principle. There is abundant evidence to the contrary in the letters which have been published by Earl Russell and others. But was it cautious or far-seeing in a party leader? He must have known that the Revolution was an event hostile to the sentiments of the great body of the nation, and repugnant to the opinions of the most important members of his own party. There was no necessity, to say the least, why he should have assumed the uncompromising position which he thought fit to maintain, or voluntarily allied himself with those who were regarded with suspicion and loathing by the most powerful classes of English society. This was an enormous blunder; it decimated the ranks of the Opposition, and made a Whig Government impossible for fifty years. But he clung to it with fatal obstinacy almost to the end; for at the very end he was forced by the inexorable logic of facts to admit that resistance to the national will was no longer possible.

The first act of the Revolution was consummated in 1789; but it was not until the 6th of May 1792, that the schism in the Opposition became publicly known. The Revolution absolutely exasperated Burke. He took it in the light of a personal insult. There was unquestionably a tinge of insanity in the angry vehemence with which he assailed it. During the last session, upon this very subject, bitter recriminations had passed between him and Sheridan, which might have been spared, "if only for the ghost of a departed friendship." And a yet earlier

and dearer fellowship was now to be sacrificed. Fox had risen during the evening, had denounced the enemies of liberty, and lauded in eloquent words the regenerated society of France. Burke found it impossible to remain silent any longer. He was, he said, no friend to tyranny. He hated tyranny, but he hated it most where most were concerned; for he knew that the tyranny of a multitude was a multiplied tyranny. Nor was he an enemy to liberty; but the liberty that he loved was a liberty associated with order and honesty, that not only existed along with virtue and justice, but that could not exist without them. This was not the liberty that had been asserted by the French Republicans; on the contrary, they had been urged on by a ferocious indocility, that seemed to have destroyed their social nature, and made them little better than the brutes. Before Burke had finished his harangue, Fox expressed a confident hope that though they might differ upon public affairs, there would be no loss of private friendship. But Burke publicly refused the proffered amnesty. There was something, he declared, so malignant in this detested constitution, that it seemed to envenom everything that it touched, and he knew that in doing his duty he had lost his friend. When he resumed his seat Fox rose to speak, but for some time was too much agitated to address the House; then, in a burst of passionate tenderness, he appealed to his revered and venerated friend—to the memory of their old affection—to the remembrance of their unalterable friendship! But Burke was inexorable. He would hold no communion with any one who sympathised with France. Her friends should be his enemies, and her enemies should be his friends. And, henceforth, the old comrades were parted by a gulf "more bitter than the bitterness of death."

Thus the result of Fox's leadership was to extinguish the Whig, as the leading power in the State, for wellnigh fifty years. From 1784 until the era of the Reform Bill the party was politically extinct. No doubt unlucky accidents *did* occur, whose bitter fruit must some time have come to maturity of evil; but the Whigs were banished from office because Fox, alike as a man and as a politician, had failed to conciliate the confidence of the people. As a man he was pronounced profligate—as a politician unsafe; and neither magnanimity nor eloquence could retrieve the position which want of character had forfeited.

Pitt, in either respect, stands out in striking contrast to his rival.

His domestic life was blameless. The tone of his mind was singularly pure and elevated. Like the Arthur of romance, William Pitt was "a blameless gentleman." Nor was his purity, as his enemies asserted, exclusively due to the reserve and coldness of his temperament. It is said that he was at one time deeply attached to Lady Eleanor Eden, and that the conviction that the ties of domestic life were inconsistent with the engrossing claims of public duty alone prevented him from making her his wife—a sacrifice dictated by a keen sense of duty, perhaps, but still in many respects to be lamented. Lady Eleanor's noble and thoughtful beauty would have associated, not unfitly, with the austere memory of the incorruptible statesman. Such a union, too, would probably have proved beneficial to Pitt himself. His integrity was somewhat icy. His incorruptibility was somewhat austere. There was a certain *hardness* in his character which a happy marriage might have cured. But when he had once decided he seldom repented.[1] And so his life went on, cast in the same mould, till its close,—cold, simple, incorruptible, wanting in the finer lights and subtler perceptions of the affections, but fascinating by its grand, imposing, and sombre masses. The last scene—the dead minister lying alone and unwatched in the deserted house—is very sad, but not out of keeping with the rest of the incidents, and with the cheerless burden of ambition he had voluntarily undertaken to bear.[2]

Pitt's public no less than his private career compelled confidence. He undoubtedly enjoyed many natural advantages. The House of Commons could not behold unmoved the son of the Great Commoner. A noble opportunity, moreover, opened to him on the very threshold of his parliamentary career; but

[1] Pitt had few friends or intimates. Dundas, and subsequently Canning, were the only men he thoroughly trusted. Even his own Chancellor intrigued against him. Thurlow, indeed, with ponderous hypocrisy denied the charge—"When I forget my King, may God forget me!" "He'll see you d—d first!" retorted Wilkes. "The best thing that can happen to you," said Burke.

[2] Earl Stanhope in his recent *Life of Pitt* has published a selection of letters from Pitt to his mother—in which kindliness of heart, and a solicitude about trifles that concerned her happiness, are manifested, and which somewhat soften the harder lines in the picture.

even his enemies admitted that he turned it to account with infinite skill and tact. It needed, indeed, marvellous nerve and moral hardihood to enter deliberately into a life and death conflict with the turbulent and despotic Commons of England. Had he then fallen he would have fallen irretrievably; but he never faltered, never wavered, never laid aside his arms, until the enemy was routed and victory won.

The conflict between the youthful Premier and the combined opposition of North and Fox, is one of the most bitter recorded in the annals of parliamentary warfare. That Pitt asserted the doctrine of the Constitution cannot now be questioned. That the ministers of the Crown are entitled to appeal to the constituencies against the verdict of an adverse Parliament, has been admitted and enforced by Lord John Russell himself.[1] But in 1784 the Opposition, secure in the support of a majority of the House of Commons, determined to guard against a dissolution, and in the attempt did not hesitate to use the most violent and arbitrary weapons. To withstand this powerful and unscrupulous confederacy must have required, as I have said, a force of moral courage with which few men are gifted. Against the minister were arrayed the genius and the authority of the most accomplished statesmen, the parliamentary influence of Lord North and the philosophical sagacity of Edmund Burke, Fox's vehement invective and Sheridan's bitter pleasantry, which, as old Robert Boyle found the toothache, "though it be not mortal, it is very troublesome." The ministers were at one time denounced as a set of desperate miscreants, who persisted in holding office against the confidence of the Commons; at another ridiculed as arrogant young gentlemen, who required to be taught that Government was too serious a business to be made the toy of the school-room. The Premier was

"The Virgin Minister—the Heaven-born youth;"

and the charge of precocious and profligate ambition was hurled against the "new Octavius." But Pitt's courageous pertinacity proved equal to the crisis. Animated especially by the resolute support of the King and the Duke of Richmond, he continued to maintain his difficult position with a proud humility, that is not without its charm. To the arguments of the Opposition he

[1] *Life and Times of Charles James Fox.* Vol. ii. p. 56. London: 1859.

replied in skilful and eloquent speeches, which displayed a profound acquaintance with constitutional law and the history and practice of Parliament. Its taunts and its reproaches he treated with haughty silence, and that superb contempt which is described by those who knew him as a marked feature in his character. When the contest had lasted for nearly four months, when the Government had undergone a succession of ignominious defeats, when invective and argument had been alike exhausted, the majority was at length forced to admit that the House of Commons had been discomfited in a desperate conflict by a Minister not five-and-twenty! "In all my researches in modern and ancient times," is the testimony of the great English historian of Rome, "I have nowhere met with his parallel, who, at so early a period of his life, discharged so important a trust, with so much credit to himself and with so much advantage to his country."

When Pitt had succeeded in defeating the Coalition, his task had scarcely more than begun. He had still to give his party a bond of cohesion and a principle of union. He had to detect the exact place it was necessary to occupy between the rival political sections on the one hand, and the mass of the people on the other. He had to inaugurate, and work out, a policy which would keep the nation with him. That he did so must ever, I think, be regarded as his peculiar triumph. The material of a party, as we have seen, lay ready to his hand; but in itself it certainly was not very promising. It was chiefly composed of the old Tory connection, which had acquired a renovated force through the vices and blunders of its rivals. But there was no vitality in its creed; it had retained the dry form, while it had lost the religious energy, of its early convictions. The Toryism of Divine right and passive obedience had manifestly answered the end it was meant to serve, and now it seemed that the sooner it was dismissed the better. But the claims of its rival were equally loose and unsatisfactory. The lofty and abstract patriotism of the Whig had practically ministered only to the selfishness of the nobility. The liberty he desired was the liberty of the oligarchy to govern England, not the liberty of the people to govern themselves. His aristocratic leaders were utterly ignorant of the popular sympathies and of the popular necessities. It was with these sympathies and these necessities that, at the close of the Coali-

tion contest, Pitt identified Toryism. Feudal England had become the England of mercantile and mechanical enterprise, and under the direction of "the infant Atlas of the State," Conservatism ceased to be an aristocratic, and became a commercial, principle. Granting the people the only freedom they really cared for at the time—the freedom to create and accumulate capital—he relieved the springs of national industry, and augmented the sources of national wealth. He was the first minister of the Crown who recognised that the philosophical genius of Adam Smith "furnished the best solution to every question connected with the history of commerce, and with the systems of political economy." He was the first Chancellor of the Exchequer who brought with him to office the principles of a scientific finance. When he came into power, the income of the country, after the prolonged drain of the American war, did not supply the means of supporting even a moderate peace establishment. Within a single year his tariff—a tariff constructed upon the principle that has directed all our recent legislation, the increase of the revenue through an increase of consumption, rather than through an increase of taxation—produced a magnificent surplus. But while he profited England, he saved Conservatism. Constructing his policy on wise and liberal principles, he incorporated with a worn-out creed a new and vital element of strength, and imparted to a powerless and unimaginative party the force and the refinement of genius. In the popular interests of a mercantile community and in the maxims of an enlightened finance, he sought for it a more permanent pre-eminence than could be derived from the wealth of an aristocratic connection, or the influence of a shattered tradition. More than once, even within our own memory, has Toryism been in this way rescued by a subtle, profound, and prolific intellect; and if even now it can with truth be said to exert any real influence upon our national life, it is because it has been thus redeemed from its arbitrary instincts, and its more literal associations.

The first ten years of Pitt's administration present a marked contrast to those which succeeded. His genius and his sympathies were pacific; he was fitted to make a great peace Minister; but he was forced to become the Minister of war. "Forced," we say, because there can be no doubt that he regarded war with dislike, and that those who attribute to his

ambition the participation of England in the revolutionary war speak without a knowledge of the facts. He struggled earnestly to keep the country aloof, and he refused to join "the coalesced kings" in their ill-advised attempt to regulate the internal organisation of France. *That* question, he always declared, was one which the French people alone were competent to decide. "If," said Canning in 1794, describing and vindicating the policy of the Ministry, "it had been a harmless, idiot lunacy, which had contented itself with playing its tricks and practising its fooleries *at home*, with dressing up strumpets in oak-leaves and inventing nicknames for the calendar, I should have been far from desiring to interrupt their innocent amusements; we might have looked on with hearty contempt indeed, but with a contempt not wholly unmixed with commiseration." It was not until Dumouriez had made the Ardennes Forest "the Thermopylæ of France;" it was not until the war on the part of the Convention had ceased to be a war of defence, and become a war of aggression and propagandism; it was not until the King had been put to death, that Pitt came to see that neutrality could no longer be preserved. It was not Pitt, it was the French and the English people, who made war inevitable. When the Convention, on the 19th of November 1792, decreed that it would assist with arms all nations who wished to recover their liberty, it virtually declared war against the constituted Governments of Europe. But England was by no means unwilling to participate in the contest. "The coalesced kings threaten us," shouted Danton, "and we cast at their feet, as our gage of battle, the head of a king." The English people eagerly accepted the challenge. The atrocities of the Revolution had horrified them; its successes had scared them; and, horror-stricken and panic-stricken, they threw themselves blindly into the battle, and dragged the Minister along with them. The revolutionary war has been called a war of principle; it was rather, in so far as England was involved, a war of sentiment and passion. The moral sense of the country had been outraged by the indecent and ferocious excesses of the Republic, and it protested accordingly, and in the aggressive shape an Englishman's moral protest generally takes.

The war was indeed protracted and disastrous; before it was finished Fox and Pitt were in their graves, and a new generation had arisen. But to attribute these disasters to the policy

of the Minister is surely most unjust. The fate of battles was against him; the genius of Napoleon was against him; but he did his part with a lavish hand and a stout heart. He did not starve the war; he addressed the undivided energies of the country to the conflict; he strained them to the utmost. And in the end the indomitable resolution which that "proud and stoical soul" had imparted to the people, did not fail,—

> "We fought right on, with conquering banners o'er us,
> From Torres Vedras to the Pyrenees."

The laurels reaped during that triumphant march were reserved for other brows; but it was Pitt's policy that made it possible. Nor must we forget that, from first to last, England remained Mistress of the Sea.

The Opposition alleged that after he had once embarked in the war, Pitt would never listen to any overture for peace; but the charge, though no doubt to some extent correct, can hardly be made matter of reproach to the Minister. Pitt accurately estimated the malign nature of the conflict. He was opposed to a great captain for whose insatiable ambition war was an inexorable necessity. Napoleon's power rested upon a military basis; and such a power was in its very nature a perpetual menace to Europe. To make peace with this foe was, as Pitt felt, virtually impracticable. A truce was more unsafe than a war, even though the war might be burdensome and disastrous. The Opposition thundered against the bloody and ambitious Minister; but when the Opposition itself succeeded to power, it was forced to acknowledge that Pitt was right; and that, as long as Napoleon and the French army lay like a thundercloud over Europe, it was impossible to patch up even a provisional peace.[1]

Such were the two men who for twenty eventful years divided the admiration of the House of Commons—who still on either hand salute the stranger as, with uncovered head, he enters the temple of the State. Pitt—the superb Commoner, who has refused the blue ribbon, and will never accept of any reward for his great services, either from his king or his

[1] The whole question really resolves itself into this,—Who in his estimate of Napoleon was nearest the mark, Pitt or Fox? And the terrible indictment of M. Lanfrey furnishes a conclusive reply.

country — from childhood superior to pleasure, temperate, abstemious, and with a reputation for unblemished integrity —fluent, clear, correct, and commanding as an orator—with arguments that appeal rather to the reason than to the imagination—severely just and coldly inflexible,—we recognise in him a great Constitutional Minister, a haughty defender of the ancient order, a fitting representative of the most august and powerful Monarchy in Europe! Fox, on the other hand, with the light-heartedness of a boy—passionately enamoured of life—loving pleasure intensely, and quitting it with difficulty and regret—wanting, indeed, in the patient courage, foresight, and energy of the disciplined intellect, but wielding with matchless skill a burning eloquence, searchingly argumentative even when most impetuous—to us he recalls the simple and courageous tribune of a degraded populace—the old orator, who could weep for very shame that they will *not* be stirred, as high above the crowd he thunders against the insolent dictator, and casts down his fiery words, like hailstones, upon the upturned faces of the people!

The lines of opposition between the two statesmen are for the most part strongly marked; but at length, as the end approaches, as the curtain drops, they approximate and unite. The lifelong rivals are reconciled. Each is exhausted with the conflict; the fire burns low; "the wine of life is on the lees." The principles to which they had clung are worn out by their vehement advocacy. One after the other the positions they had successfully taken up have been abandoned. They had espoused opinions wide as the poles asunder; and now it has come to this—they are at one. They were strong men both; but events had proved too strong for either.

They spent their lives together, and in death they were not divided. Pitt died—"of old age"—at forty-six; a few months elapsed, and Fox was laid by his side. The noble lament in *Marmion* was uttered over the tomb where rest the ashes of both the rivals.

> "Now is the stately column broke,
> The beacon-light is quenched in smoke,
> The trumpet's silver sound is still,
> The warder silent on the hill!"

Pitt's mantle fell upon Canning. Canning was his pupil

and his heir. "To one man, while he lived, I was devoted with all my heart, and all my soul. Since the death of Mr Pitt, I acknowledge no leader; my political allegiance lies buried in his grave."[1]

In very early life Canning had given indications of high talent, and of the qualities of mind which afterwards distinguished him. Even in the *Microcosm* of his Eton days he displayed, along with much literary cleverness, a tact, moderation of judgment, and fastidiousness of taste, which are seldom met with at that immature period of life. The *Anti-Jacobin* confirmed his literary reputation. His contributions to its columns will live with the language. They are very slight, but their classic polish and finish, their refined, subtle, and stealthy irony, their perfect mimetic grace, secure them a high place among the exquisite trifles of art which inherit immortality. Most of his impromptus have disappeared with the society on which they floated; but the few that remain are sufficient to indicate the skill and felicity with which he spoke and thought. What can be more perfect in their way than his pleasantries on Mr Whitbread? Here is one of them—less known than his *Anti-Jacobin* sallies, and therefore justifying reproduction:—

FRAGMENT OF AN ORATION.

Part of Mr Whitbread's speech on the trial of Lord Melville, put into verse by Mr Canning, at the time it was delivered:—

"I'm like Archimedes for science and skill,
I'm like a young prince going straight up a hill;
I'm like (with respect to the fair be it said),
I'm like a young lady just bringing to bed.
If you ask why the eleventh of June I remember,
Much better than April, or May, or November,

[1] Mr Canning's speech at Liverpool on the occasion of his contest with Mr Brougham: Mr Brougham retorted in a powerful passage of eloquent invective:—

"Gentlemen, I stand up in this contest against the friends and followers of Mr Pitt, or, as they partially designate him, the immortal statesman, now no more. Immortal in the miseries of his devoted country! Immortal in the wounds of her bleeding liberties! Immortal in the cruel wars which sprang from his cold, miscalculating ambition! Immortal in the intolerable taxes, the countless loads of debt which these wars have flung upon us—which the youngest man amongst us will not live to see the end of! Immortal in the triumphs of our

On that day, my Lords, with truth I assure ye,
My sainted progenitor set up his brewery;
On that day, in the morning, he began brewing beer;
On that day too commenced his connubial career:
On that day he received and he issued his bills;
On that day he cleared out all the cash from his tills;
On that day he died, having finished his summing,
And the Angels all cried, 'Here's old Whitbread a-coming!'
So that day still I hail with a smile and a sigh
For his beer with an E, and his bier with an I;
And still on that day in the hottest of weather,
The whole Whitbread family dine all together.
So long as the beams of this house shall support
The roof which o'ershades this respectable court,
Where Hastings was tried for oppressing the Hindoos;
So long as the sun shall shine in at those windows,
My name shall shine bright as my ancestor's shines,
Mine recorded in journals, *his* blazoned on signs!"

Canning's early associations were with the Whig party. At the house of his uncle, Mr Stratford Canning, he became acquainted with its most eminent members. The beautiful and vivacious Mrs Crew, who, with the Duchess of Devonshire, adorned and inspired the Whig society of the metropolis, was one of his personal friends. Before he had left Oxford, he was looked upon as "one of themselves," and Sheridan, on the occasion of Mr Jenkinson's first speech, announced his coming to the House of Commons. When, therefore, he entered Parliament as a supporter of the Minister, the resentment and

enemies, and the ruin of our allies—the costly purchase of so much blood and treasure! Immortal in the afflictions of England, and the humiliation of her friends, through the whole results of his twenty years' reign, from the first rays of favour with which a delighted court gilded his early apostasy, to the deadly glare which is at this instant cast upon his name by the burning metropolis of our last ally! But may no such immortality ever fall to my lot; let me rather live innocent and inglorious: and when at last I cease to serve you, and to feel for your wrongs, may I have a humble monument in some nameless stone, to tell that beneath it there rests from his labours in your service, '*an enemy of the immortal statesman—a friend of peace and of the people.*'"

Lord Brougham has criticised Mr Canning; Mr Stapleton tells us Mr Canning's opinion of Mr Brougham. "I recollect one day, when riding on the grounds near Brighton, telling him that I had received a letter from London, stating that Mr Brougham was dangerously ill. 'Poor fellow,' said Mr Canning, 'I am very sorry to hear it;' and then after a minute's pause he added, 'If he should be taken from the House of Commons, there will be no one left *to pound and mash.*'"

mortification of the connection were angrily manifested. He was called a traitor and an apostate, a Judas who for the loaves and fishes had sold his faith. For many years, whenever he rose to speak, Grey and Tierney left the House. Such conduct was absurd. To make a boy responsible for the immature opinions which family tradition or youthful vanity may lead him to adopt is ridiculous and offensive. Nor is there any proof that Canning *had* expressed the sentiments imputed to him. He originally sympathised with the French reformers, but their excesses quickly alienated his moderate temper and his refined tastes, and the commanding genius of Pitt at an early period attracted his admiration. "Were I in Parliament," he writes to one of his Oxford friends—"where I some time hence hope to be—my support and opinion would go with *Mr Pitt.*"

In 1793 he entered the House of Commons! and in the following session made his first speech, which was subdued but effective. The narrative of his feelings on this occasion is very graphic:—"I intended to have told you, at full length, what were my feelings at getting up, and being pointed at by the Speaker, and hearing my name called from all sides of the House; how I trembled lest I should hesitate, or misplace a word in the two or three first sentences; while all was dead silence around me, and my own voice sounded to my ears quite like some other gentleman's; how, in about ten minutes or less, I got warmed in collision with Fox's arguments, and did not even care twopence for anybody or anything; how I was roused, in about half an hour, from this pleasing state of self-sufficiency, by accidentally casting my eyes towards the Opposition bench, for the purpose of paying compliments to Fox, and assuring him of my respect and admiration, and there seeing certain members of Opposition laughing (as I thought), and quizzing me; how this accident abashed me, and, together with my being out of breath, rendered me incapable of uttering; how those who sat below me on the Treasury bench, seeing what it was that distressed me, cheered loudly, and the House joined them; and how, in less than a minute, straining every nerve in my body, and plucking up every bit of resolution in my heart, I went on more boldly than ever, and getting into a part of my subject that I liked, and, having the House with me, got happily and triumphantly to the end."

Canning had almost every quality fitted to make him a favourite with the House of Commons. His manner was always indeed somewhat haughty and authoritative; he was an unsparing antagonist; he exhausted himself at all times—these are his own words—"in endeavours to give vigour and sharpness to political hostility." The Whigs, moreover, as we have seen, regarded him at first with bitter aversion; but they constituted at that time a small minority in the House, and their influence was not sufficient to make their hostility very prejudicial to its object.

Canning's presence was singularly graceful. His figure was slight and wiry; his features, finely cut and decisive, were at the same time very mobile, and capable of a subtle play and variety of expression,—a union seldom met with. "There is a lighting up of his features, and a comic play about the mouth," Wilberforce said, "when the full force of the approaching witticism strikes his own mind, which prepares you for the burst which is to follow." His head, altogether, was one of great intellectual power and beauty; the kind of head that is more frequently found on Greek statues than on English members of Parliament. His voice was low, but so rich, and clear, and perfectly modulated, that it was heard distinctly in every part of the House. There was an air of high-breeding and aristocratic distinction in every gesture, which those who dubbed him an "adventurer" did not always possess.

His eloquence was calm, serene, and luminous. He was seldom passionate; rarely yielded to excitement or emotion —but when he did, the effect was electrical. The vehemence struck all the more keenly, from the contrast it presented to his passionless demeanour, his sarcastic temper, and his habitual reserve. With the lighter artillery of parliamentary defence and attack he was completely furnished. His irony was swift and stealthy,—it stabbed like the stiletto. "I can excuse him," he said, when Mr Windham's military measures were supported by his colleagues on grounds which he himself had repudiated, "for having disdained to answer the attacks of his opponents, but I am surprised that he should not have vindicated himself from the support of his friends." He particularly excelled in that refined pleasantry—that indirect and gentlemanly *quizzing*—which is so much relished by the House of Commons. The heavy Falmouth coach "conveying the

succour of Lord Nugent's person to Spain"—the Government discovering that there really was something like a war between France and Prussia, "by the trifling circumstance that the Prussian army was annihilated"—the account of Mr Windham's expeditions[1]—are capital specimens of this vein of grave and good-humoured banter.

Mr Stapleton gives some very interesting details of the manner in which he prepared for a great speech. "His whole mind was absorbed in it for two or perhaps three days beforehand. He spared no labour in obtaining and in arranging his materials. He always drew up a paper (which he used in the House) with the heads, in their order, of the several topics on which he meant to touch, and these heads were numbered, and the numbers sometimes extended to four or even five hundred." Some of these "headings" have been preserved, and they are very curious. We have only room for one—the unused notes of a speech in reply to Mr Hobhouse, who, Mr Canning believed, had, in an anonymous pamphlet, suggested his assassination.

391. But in or out of office.
392. The Constitution is my object of worship.
393. And in this her temple.
394. For that obloquy.
395. For that demonstration.
396. For that designation, and I pretty well know by what pen, to the dagger of the assassin.
397. But it is past—the danger and the scorn.
398. Let them rail, or let them repent.
399. My course is the same.
400. And while I have the strength, I desire no other duty than that of doing my best in defence of a form of Government which, if destroyed, could not be replaced, and which may yet afford shelter and glory to generations who will know how to value and preserve it.

Not only were these external characteristics in his favour; the temper of his mind was peculiarly fitted to win the confidence of the House of Commons. He was brave, intrepid, and honourable; no stain of baseness ever soiled his reputation. To such an one an assembly of English gentlemen can

[1] "A fire-work before Boulogne and—yet that wanted confirmation—an embarkation on the Paddington Canal. But for the uncommon openness of the weather, it is probable that his army would have been frozen up at Uxbridge."

forgive much. And the moderation of his character attuned with their own. This moderation was intimately allied with his fastidiousness. His severe and dainty taste, the extreme care with which he lingered over the structure of a sentence, or the exact etymological significance of a word—sometimes, perhaps, degenerated into prudery. He scanned a royal speech till the faintest tinge of colour was bleached out of it. The King's message upon the affairs of Portugal was discovered at the eleventh hour to contain a slight grammatical error: Mr Canning would not present it to the House until the inaccuracy had been carefully erased. Some people may be disposed to resent this jealous attention to verbal niceties; we are not. Mental slovenliness is as obnoxious as bodily; and scrupulous neatness, both in dress and language, is a virtue of the first magnitude. Confusion in speech is commonly the index of confused thinking; and the philosopher and the statesman should weigh the precise import of words as rigorously as the lawyer. A man so constitutionally fastidious as Canning was, could not help being temperate. He had a horror of excess in every shape; whatever shocked good taste was repugnant to him; the extravagances of enthusiasm were regarded with critical dislike by his fair and unimpassioned intellect. A shade of meditative irony runs perhaps through his mind; but he had no very deep convictions, nor the stuff of which bigots and martyrs are made. Yet, with all his Epicurean delicacy and meteor-like brilliancy, he possessed a remarkably sound understanding, and a rare fund of common-sense. His great speech upon the bullion question showed the most perfect acquaintance with the intricacies of practical finance. "He *played*," says Horner, "with its most knotty subtleties."

This moderation was the key-note of Canning's character, and determined his political career. He was liberal and yet a Tory, the adversary of reform and yet the ardent advocate of toleration. Wherever a tangible grievance existed, he devoted his energies to its redress; but he opposed every scheme of theoretical amelioration. He was the lifelong advocate of Catholic emancipation: he was the lifelong opponent of constitutional change. During the time he was in office, the question of Greek independence arose. The attitude he assumed towards it strikingly illustrates the habitual temperance of his disposition. When all Europe had gone crazy about

the "degenerate offspring of the free," Canning maintained the even tenor of his mind. He was a fine scholar, and was not insensible to the classical associations which the struggle suggested; but he would not allow his imagination to take his judgment captive, or divert him from prudent and temperate counsels; and he expressed the keenest contempt for those who, to reconstruct the baseless fabric of a vision, blindly perilled the practical wellbeing of Europe. "I have traced Chateaubriand's agents," he writes, scornfully, "perplexing the unhappy Greeks with I know not what absurd fancies of elective monarchies, and crusades against the infidel, with new knighthoods of Malta, at three shillings and sixpence a head." He himself tried to accommodate the dispute between the Greeks and their Mussulman masters by a reasonable compromise. He negotiated a treaty which provided that, on the payment of a moderate fixed duty to the Porte, the Turkish army should be removed from Greece. But this wise and politic *middle course* was of course unacceptable to the imaginative politicians who, for the dream of a Republic, were content to abet the ambitious designs of Russia.

On his foreign policy the fame of Mr Canning must ultimately depend. He was the ablest foreign minister that England has had for a century. The principles on which his policy rested were admirably conceived, and most skilfully executed. From the beginning to the end of his career they are evolved with dramatic consistency.

I must briefly justify this assertion.

Canning entered heart and soul into Mr Pitt's contest with France. He held that the conflict was unavoidable, and that it had been forced upon a minister "whose fame as well as power rested upon the basis of the financial prosperity of the country." The indecent excesses of the French Republicans, moreover, shocked his taste; and when the Republic was at length destroyed by one of its own offspring, he bursts into a shout of triumph. "Huzza! huzza! huzza!" (he exclaims, in 1799), "Buonaparte, an apostate from the cause of liberty, —Buonaparte, the avowed tyrant of his country, is an object to be contemplated with enthusiasm—to be held up to the admiration and gratitude of mankind. Tell me not that he will make France more powerful—that he will make war with more vigour, or peace with more dexterity, than the exploded

Directory have done; I care not. No! no! It is the thorough destruction of the principles of exaggerated liberty—it is the lasting ridicule thrown upon all systems of democratic equality—it is this that makes the name of Buonaparte dear to me—this his one act has done, let him conduct himself as he may hereafter; let him be a general, or a legislator, or a monarch, or a captive, crowned or beheaded, it is all the same for this purpose. Buonaparte may flourish, but the idol of Jacobinism is no more." Like Pitt, he did not believe in the possibility of peace. The conflict, he held, was unappeasable until its cause was removed. The military despotism of Napoleon was a volcanic power which, even when at rest, perpetually threatened the tranquillity of Europe. The peace of Amiens—"the never, never to be excused or atoned for, this most disgraceful and calamitous treaty of peace"—he bitterly condemned. "I would never have signed it," he wrote; "I would have cut off my right hand rather."

Both the great leaders of the great English parties died in 1806—Fox with his last breath urging the vigorous prosecution of the war he had so often denounced; and towards the close of that year the Portland Administration was formed, in which, for the first time, Canning occupied the post of Foreign Secretary.

The times were times of peril and disaster. Napoleon was at the climax of his power. The whole Continent lay at his feet, and the Imperial dictator had remodelled the map of Europe. The only Government, except the English, which had hitherto opposed an obstinate resistance to his ambition had at length succumbed; and the French and Russian autocrats were now, to all appearance, firmly united. England alone remained; and the secret article of the Treaty of Tilsit—by which Napoleon and Alexander agreed that the fleets of the neutral Powers should be taken possession of by them—aimed a blow at her naval supremacy which, had it taken effect, would have irretrievably crippled her resources. Fortunately the ambitious intrigue was disclosed to the English Government. The situation was one of instant peril. Whatever was to be done must be done at once. Mr Canning did not hesitate. The Danish fleet was the object of the confederates; an English force was instantly despatched to Copenhagen, the fleet was captured, and conveyed to Portsmouth.

This was a daring blow; one which a fearless and audacious

genius alone could have dictated; one, therefore, which the timid and the sanctimonious have not been slow to condemn. Heavy sermons have been preached upon the violation of the law of nations which it involved; ponderous speeches have denounced the man who sanctioned this profligate attack upon a friendly, or at least a neutral Power. The world has declined to indorse these vapid platitudes and weak sentimentalisms. Emergencies unquestionably arise, alike in the life of men and of nations, for the solution of which the ordinary rules of moral judgment do not serve. The conduct of the men who have to encounter these crises must be estimated by another standard, and by a different code. That code has justified Mr Canning. It is possible to kill without being guilty of murder; it is possible to rob without being a thief; and a man may break the law of nations without becoming a buccaneer. The great man sees through the thin sophistries and fictions which society has erected for its protection. The Danish fleet was the property of the Danish Government, with whom we were at peace; but it was practically in the possession of the Allies, with whom we were at war. If it was not used *by us*, it would certainly be used *against us*. Strength imposes certain obligations; but so does weakness; and if a feeble Government neglect to observe these obligations, it must take the consequences. Denmark was unable to resist the coercion of the Continental powers; and if she chose to retain a weapon of offence which she could not herself use, but which could be used by others, we were, for our own protection, entitled to take it out of her hands. England was in great and imminent peril; to the supreme moral fearlessness of Mr Canning we owe, in no small measure, her deliverance.

The effect of the blow was great. It "stunned" the Russian autocrat into his senses. The French Emperor was exasperated beyond measure. "Since the death of Paul," says Fouché, "I never saw Napoleon abandon himself to such violent transports of passion." While the issue hung in the balance, Canning remained in a state of keen anxiety. "It is a most wearying suspense," he writes in one letter. In another —"Nothing yet. It is very extraordinary; and very, very anxious." At length, after an interval of intense disquietude, the news of complete victory arrived. The Foreign Secretary had effectually deranged the aggressive policy of Tilsit.

Canning felt keenly that either England or the Emperor must *go down;* and so, disregarding all subordinate friendships and enmities, he bent the whole force of his mind to defeat the ambition of Napoleon, and deliver Europe from the incubus which smothered her. "It is evident his head is turned; it is for us to cure the vertigo;" "Whoever is the enemy of Napoleon is the friend of England," were the mottoes of his policy. The capture of the Danish fleet had saved England; the revolt of the Spanish people saved Europe. The whole significance of that outburst was immediately apprehended by Canning. "A nation like that," he said, "may be exterminated, but cannot be subdued;" and he confidently backed the sluggish and tenacious patriotism of the Spaniard against the rapid sweep and brilliant genius of the Corsican. Money and troops were forwarded to the Peninsula; and Sir Arthur Wellesley, whose pre-eminent military capacity Canning was among the first to recognise, was despatched to take the command. No disasters could shake the minister's confidence. "While Cadiz is safe, Spain is not lost; and while all is not lost, all is ultimately retrievable." A noble confidence nobly redeemed.

But though Canning organised the policy which ultimately proved fatal to the Empire, he did not remain to complete it. After his unlucky duel with Lord Castlereagh he resigned the Foreign Secretaryship, and did not until 1822 again hold the office. The interregnum was unfortunate, alike for his own fame and for England. For himself, because the years between were years crowded with brilliant military achievements, and important diplomatic transactions, which would have crowned the minister's reputation. For England, because on his retirement Castlereagh assumed the conduct of our foreign relations. Had Canning remained in office, we may rest assured that he would not have sanctioned the settlement of 1815. Had he remained in office the "Holy Alliance" would have been nipped in the bud, and the struggle we have lately witnessed—a struggle to readjust on a better defined and more natural basis the distribution of power in Europe—might have been averted.

On Lord Castlereagh's death Canning returned to the Foreign Office. Great changes had taken place since he quitted it. "The mighty deluge by which the Continent was overwhelmed had subsided; the limits of nations were again visible, and the

spires and turrets of ancient establishments had reappeared above the subsiding wave." But a new peril now threatened Europe. Three of the Allied Sovereigns had been frightened out of their wits by the monstrous progeny of the Revolution, and they entered at Paris into an offensive and defensive alliance. The programme of the "Holy Alliance" was suspiciously vague and fantastic, but its real motives were quickly penetrated. Its authors elected themselves the constitutional police of Europe. Whenever a popular insurrection against a tyrannical ruler broke out, whenever a free government was demanded, whenever a liberal institution was established, the Alliance was up and doing. These and similar movements were pregnant with danger to the peace of the world; and it was the duty of the constitutional police to secure order and to preserve tranquillity. Such was the specious scheme which "the craft of the Bohemian," "the ferocity of the Tartar," and "the obstinacy of the Vandal,"[1] had devised, and which for many years arrested the expression of independent thought and national life over the continent of Europe.

Castlereagh had tacitly acquiesced in the policy of the Alliance. The prestige and authority of the ancient monarchies represented in the association had produced their natural effect upon a mind obstinately hostile to liberal institutions. But to Canning the Alliance was utterly repugnant—repugnant to his English feelings, and to his liberal inclinations. Gradually, imperceptibly, with fine skill, he detached England from the connection. He thwarted its policy, he ridiculed its anger, he defied its threats. He won, but it was a hard fight. The king was against him; the Duke of Wellington was against him. Metternich, the great champion of legitimacy, employed all his vast influence, and all the arts of courtly intrigue, to procure the Foreign Secretary's dismissal, and raised in Canning's breast a feeling of bitter but contemptuous suspicion. "I am quite clear," he says to Lord Liverpool, "that there is no honesty in Metternich, and that we cannot enter into joint concert with him without a certainty of being betrayed. It is not only his practice, but in our case it will be his pride and pleasure." Again, writing to Lord Granville, he expresses his

[1] The complimentary epithets used by Mr Brougham to describe the members of the Alliance—the King of Prussia, and the Emperors of Austria and Russia.

opinion in even stronger language. "You ask me what you shall say to Metternich. In the first place you shall hear what I think of him—that he is the greatest rogue and liar on the Continent, perhaps in the civilised world." But Canning's perseverance, caution, and *will* triumphed over every obstacle; and the foreign policy of England has ever since retained the impress of the principles he then stamped upon it.

During the years between 1822 and 1827—when he held the seals of the Foreign Office—he withdrew the English plenipotentiary from the Congress of Verona, he recognised the independence of the Spanish colonies, and he despatched a force to the Tagus to aid the Portuguese. Each of these acts was intended to disengage England from the Alliance, and to manifest how radically we were opposed to the principles it promulgated.

The Congress of Verona sanctioned the occupation of Spain by France. Spain had tried the experiment of liberal institutions, and the Alliance naturally resented the experiment. So the French King was deputed to bring his refractory neighbour back to reason, and to right ways of thinking and governing. When, however, this resolution was arrived at, the Duke of Wellington, who represented England in the Congress, protested and withdrew. Canning was satisfied with a dignified protest; we were not bound by any specific treaties to assist Spain; and until a question of national faith or national honour should arise, he was resolved that England should neither originate nor participate in a war, the limits of which, as he said, no mortal sagacity could determine.

The French occupation was no doubt keenly resented by the Foreign Secretary; and, though he did not allow his feelings to hurry him into war, he speedily and effectually retaliated. In the following year England recognised the independence of the Spanish American colonies.

Mr Canning eagerly pressed the recognition. Various motives impelled him to do so. By recognising the independence of the colonies he disavowed in the face of the world the principles of the Alliance; and he deprived France of the moral weight which it might otherwise have derived from the possession of the Spanish kingdom.

It was obviously a heavy blow and great discouragement to the Alliance. The Alliance had been instituted to aid dis-

tressed kings in reducing refractory populations, and now, on the first opportunity, England proclaimed, not merely that the populations were entitled to please themselves, but that she would officially recognise any institution, Monarchical or Republican, under which they chose to live. Moreover, the recognition prevented France from reaping any disproportionate influence from the possession of Spain. France might keep Spain if she liked, but at least it should not be "Spain *with the Indies.*" This was the argument Mr Canning urged, and which, in his great speech on Portugal, he illustrated with surpassing eloquence. "I called the New World into existence to redress the balance of the Old!"

The argument appears simple and obvious, but it was attacked, shortly before Mr Canning's death, with peculiar acrimony, by Earl Grey, who, with all the narrow sectarianism of the Whig aristocrat, disliked the "ambitious adventurer" under whose colours his party was then proud to serve. Mr Canning intended to answer the speech, but the opportunity never came; and indeed, except in regard to one or two subordinate accusations, any answer would have been quite superfluous. The Earl asserted that the recognition of the colonies had not been made with the view of redressing the balance of power by diminishing the influence of France. This was the gravamen of the charge,—the sting of the speech. It was ungenerously but distinctly insinuated that Canning's striking vindication of his American policy was *an after-thought.* The documents published by Mr Stapleton completely refute the insinuation;[1] for they prove conclusively that the French occupation materially influenced the decision of the English Cabinet. In the report, for instance, which the Foreign Secretary submitted to the King on the subject, it is expressly stated that the argument had been already fully discussed. "That, consistently with the situation in which Spain is placed by the indefinite occupation of her strong places by the arms of a foreign Power, she cannot be considered as a free agent, and that of course Spain is essentially French in her foreign policy, *it becomes our duty to prevent Spanish America from being brought within the same subjection,* are points which appear to your servants to be so

[1] *George Canning and his Times,* by Augustus Granville Stapleton—1859.

conclusively argued in Lord Liverpool's paper, that it would be unpardonable to trouble your Majesty with any further discussion of them." So that the Foreign Secretary's eloquent vindication was no trick of artful rhetoric, no piece of idle bravado, but a literal and unembellished recital of the *fact.*

All Mr Canning's anticipations of the effects of the measure have not indeed been realised. "Spanish America is free," he exclaims, "and, if we do not mismanage our matters sadly, she is English, and

Novus sæclorum nascitur ordo."

Liberated America, alike to her own citizens and her allies, has proved rather a worthless possession. Its decay probably was too inveterate to admit under any circumstances of healthy reorganisation; and Mr Canning at least is not responsible for the failure of the experiment. "The responsibility rests not with me. *Liberavi animam meam.*"

Mr Canning's Portuguese policy was the corner-stone of the wise and sagacious system he inaugurated. It elicited, moreover, in the most marked manner, the enthusiasm of his contemporaries. The Emperor of Brazil, in resigning the Crown of Portugal, had accompanied his abdication with the grant of a constitutional charter. The much-suffering Alliance angrily protested; and as its protest remained unheeded, recurred to its old weapons. An army of Portuguese deserters, secretly organised and disciplined in Spain, were invited to invade their native country. But Mr Canning was prepared for the emergency. He had perceived at an early period that "Portugal was the ground on which the Holy Alliance meant to fight England," and he was ready to lift the glove. Portugal was our most ancient ally, and many treaties bound us to defend the integrity of her dominions. We had not interfered when Spain was occupied; but the time had come when the policy of non-intervention could no longer be persevered in, and when it was necessary to show that, though moderate, we were not pusillanimous. Hitherto we had diplomatically and passively resisted the Alliance; now the faith of treaties, the dictates of national honour, and the principles of the independent policy we had adopted, demanded an active and armed intervention. An English army was instantly despatched to the Tagus, where it was received "with frantic joy" by the population.

But the ovation which the army received from the people of Lisbon was equalled by that which awaited the Minister in the House of Commons. The King's Message respecting Portugal was taken into consideration on the 12th December 1826. Mr Canning, in a most luminous and statesmanlike speech—"extraordinary and unprecedented in this house," was Mr Brougham's testimony, "unprecedented (and I can give it no higher praise) even in the eloquence of the right honourable gentleman"—described the circumstances which rendered it, in the opinion of Ministers, imperative that Portugal should not be left unaided. "We go to Portugal," he concluded, "not to rule, not to dictate, not to prescribe constitutions, but to preserve and defend the independence of an ally. We go to plant the standard of England on the well-known heights of Lisbon. Where that standard is planted, foreign dominion shall not come."

The speech is a model of calm and elevated argument, tersely and vigorously expressed. Certain passages,—that, for instance, in which he likens England to the ruler of the winds—

> ———Celsâ sedet Æolus arce
> Sceptra tenens; mollitque animos, et temperat iras;
> Ni faciat, maria ac terras cælumque profundum,
> Quippe ferant rapidi secum, verrantque per auras,—

rise without embarrassment into a grave and thoughtful eloquence. The speech was vehemently applauded; but the great triumph was reserved for a later period of the evening. A feeble opposition had been threatened by Mr Hume and one or two other members, and after a vigorous oration from Mr Brougham, the Foreign Secretary rose to reply. That reply is a masterpiece of argument and eloquence; and to it alone, if need were, the vindication of the *orator's* fame might be left. The passage which explains the policy of the Government in not declaring war when Spain was occupied, is perhaps the most striking. The effects of the French occupation, the speaker said, had been infinitely exaggerated; but he did not blame these exaggerations, for he was aware that they were the echoes of sentiments which in the days of William and of Anne—"the best times of our history"—animated the debates, and dictated the votes, of the British Parliament. But Spain was then a great maritime power, and she was no longer so. "It

would be disingenuous, indeed," the speaker continued, "not to admit that the entry of the French army into Spain was in a certain sense a disparagement—an affront to the pride—a blow to the feelings of England; and it can hardly be supposed that on that occasion the Government did not sympathise with the feelings of the people. But I deny that, questionable or censurable as the act might be, it was one which necessarily called for our direct and hostile opposition. Was nothing, then, to be done? Was there no other mode of resistance, than by a direct attack upon France—or by a war to be undertaken on the soil of Spain? What, if the position of Spain might be rendered harmless in rival hands—harmless as regarded us—and valueless to the possessors? Might not compensation for disparagement be obtained, and the policy of our ancestors vindicated, by means better adapted to the present time? If France occupied Spain, was it necessary, in order to avoid the consequences of that occupation, that we should blockade Cadiz? No. I looked another way—I sought materials of compensation in another hemisphere. Contemplating Spain, such as our ancestors had known her, I resolved that if France had Spain, it should not be Spain 'with the Indies.' I called the New World into existence to redress the balance of the Old."

The effect which this memorable speech produced on the House of Commons is admitted, both by friends and foes, to have been quite unprecedented. "It was an epoch in a man's life to have heard him," writes a member who was present. "When, in the style and manner of Chatham, he exclaimed, 'I looked to Spain in the Indies; I called a New World into existence to redress the balance of the Old;' the effect was actually terrific. It was as if every man in the House had been electrified. Mr Canning seemed actually to have increased in stature, his attitude was so majestic. I remarked his flourishes were made with his left arm; the effect was new and beautiful; his chest heaved and expanded; his nostril dilated; a noble pride slightly curled his lip; and age and sickness were dissolved and forgotten in the ardour of youthful genius." "The whole House were moved," says Mr Stapleton, "as if an electric shock had passed through them: *they all rose for a moment to look at him!* This effect I witnessed from under the gallery." And Mr Canning himself, writing two days afterwards to Lord Granville, says, "If I know anything

of the House of Commons from thirty-three years' experience, or if I may trust to what reaches me in report of feelings out-of-doors, the declaration of the obvious but unsuspected truth, that 'I called the New World into existence to redress the balance of the Old,' has been more grateful to English ears and to English feelings ten thousand times, than would have been the most satisfactory announcement of the intention of the French Government to withdraw its army from Spain."

We have described the general principles of a foreign policy which proved eminently successful: one or two minor points remain to be noticed. Canning was personally a very skilful diplomatist. His tact, penetration, and judgment were conspicuous; and he *played* his antagonists with the ease of a master. His apparent frankness and unreserve disarmed the most astute; while he delighted to tease and perplex the dull and the pretentious with knotty problems and puzzling complications. But when in earnest his tone was at once manly and moderate. He never bullied, or threatened, or stormed. "I abhor menace till one means action," he said. A thorough Englishman both in taste and temper, he was the first Foreign Secretary who insisted that English, not French, should be used in our diplomatic correspondence. "Whatever we may have to say hereafter, be it high or humble, soothing or threatening, warlike or pacific, I trust we shall never again submit to speak any language but our own." When he came to the Foreign Office in 1822, he wrote to the ambassador at St Petersburg, "You know my politics well enough to know what I mean when I say, that for *Europe* I shall be desirous *now* and *then* to read *England*." This is indeed one of the most characteristic features of his official life. In whatever he said, or did, there is the magnanimity of the English statesman, the moderation of the English gentleman.

The last months of Mr Canning's life, though the most brilliant, are also the most painful. His elevation to the Premiership on the death of Lord Liverpool was not effected without great opposition. The Duke of Newcastle called on the Sovereign, and threatened to withdraw the support of the Tory aristocracy from the Government, if Mr Canning were placed at its head. The Duke of Wellington, Mr Peel, Lord Eldon, and several members of the Cabinet, simultaneously resigned, on the ground that on the question of Catholic

Emancipation they differed from the Premier. It was confidently expected that, under these discouragements, Mr Canning would be forced to abandon the task. But his enemies had misunderstood their man. He quickly succeeded in forming an Administration, composed of the more tolerant section of the Whigs, and of the representatives of that great moderate middle party, which his genius had created alike in the country and in the Legislature. The resentment of the defeated Tories knew no bounds. The language which they employed to denounce the Minister would have disgraced Billingsgate. Night after night he was attacked with an acrimony which recalled the more discreditable features of the conflict of the Coalition with Pitt. Canning maintained his position with simplicity, with manliness, with a Pitt-like *hauteur*. At length, after having answered, fully and temperately, all the charges directed against him, he declined to protract the controversy. Until a direct vote of censure was moved, no threats, no expostulations, no entreaties, would induce him, he declared, to open his lips.

The subordinate members of "the pack who bayed him to death" are now forgotten; but the conduct of Sir Robert Peel to his old colleague still invokes the justification of his friends. These have been numerous and elaborate; successful they have not been. Upon the whole, it is better, we fancy, to admit that Sir Robert's treatment of Mr Canning was the fruit of a very natural jealousy, than to trace it to the influence of high-toned and scrupulous motives. Even great statesmen are not exempted from the vindictive feelings that afflict ordinary mortals. Peel disliked Canning, and under Canning it was virtually impossible that he could serve. This is the plain explanation of the whole matter, and posterity will not construe too hardly an inevitable antipathy.

The contest killed Canning. That virulent and unscrupulous hostility proved too much for a constitution already shattered by disease. During the whole session he had been miserably ill; he rose from a sick-bed to deliver his great speeches on Portugal; a cold caught at the Duke of York's funeral, in the Chapel of St George at Windsor, aggravated his disorder. He continued, however, to fight the enemy with indomitable resolution to the end. But it was plain that his exhausted system could not for any long time sustain the

strain. On the 3d of August he was declared to be in imminent danger; on the morning of the 8th he died. "Sir M. Tierney felt his pulse, thought for a second that he was gone, but he still breathed. In a few seconds there ceased to be any sign of breathing. He passed away so quietly that the exact moment could not be ascertained, but it was between twelve and ten minutes before four." Almost the last intelligible words he uttered were,—"This may be hard upon me, but it is harder upon the King."

And so he died—the last of a dynasty of statesmen.

DISRAELI.

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IT must be now more than a quarter of a century since, in an article in *Fraser's Magazine*, I applied to Mr Disraeli the fine lines which are to be found in the finest of our memorial poems:—

> "Who breaks his birth's invidious bar,
> And grasps the skirts of happy chance,
> And breasts the blows of circumstance,
> And grapples with his evil star;
>
> Who makes by force his merit known,
> And lives to clutch the golden keys,
> To mould a mighty state's decrees,
> And shape the whisper of the throne;
>
> And, moving up from high to higher,
> Becomes on Fortune's crowning slope
> The pillar of a people's hope,
> The centre of a world's desire."

The closing lines are descriptive of a commanding position which Mr Disraeli had certainly not attained at the time; yet the last quarter of a century has seen them come true to the letter. The brilliant leader of a forlorn-hope has been, for the past ten years at least, one of the most potent forces of the Monarchy. Years before his death, indeed, his fame had ceased to be

insular. Out of England he was the most famous of our statesmen; one of the two great figures of contemporary politics. In England we had Beaconsfield and Gladstone; in Europe they had Beaconsfield and Bismarck. And now, that potent personality has been withdrawn from the arena; and it is no longer the words of Tennyson, but of Pope, that return instinctively to the mind:—

> "Conspicuous scene! another yet is nigh,
> More silent far, where kings and poets lie;
> Where Murray—long enough his country's pride—
> Shall be no more than Tully or than Hyde!"

There has been a surprising unanimity of opinion about Lord Beaconsfield in the public journals since his death. It is felt by all classes that a Prince and a great man has fallen in Israel. But it seems to me that the apologetic tone in which many of the most characteristic incidents of his life have been dealt with shows that the writers have failed to grasp the governing principle, the determining force, the vital idiosyncrasies of his career. We have apologies for his early Radicalism; we have apologies for his conduct to Sir Robert Peel; we have apologies for his economical heresies; we have apologies for his Reform Bill; we have apologies for his foreign policy. *That* is the tone, for instance, which his eulogist in the leading journal adopts. If all these apologies are necessary, it is difficult to understand what is meant by the universal sorrow and sympathy that have been expressed, not only in England, but over Europe. Treated in this spirit, the character of Disraeli loses its picturesque identity—any credible likeness of the man in his habit as he lived becomes impossible—what we get is a mere *caput mortuum*. I believe (and I have enjoyed some rather unusual facilities for forming an opinion) that there is, throughout that remarkable career, from the

point of view of the man himself, *an essential consistency.* I say, from *his* point of view; and that is the main matter; it is not necessary to maintain that the opinions which he held were wise or just, but only that they were sincere and his own.

One would hardly have fancied, after a passing glimpse of Mr Disraeli in the House of Commons thirty years ago, that this was a man of quite unusual energy and resource. The face was massive indeed, but impassive; and the habitual manner spoke of indolence and languor. He was as ceaselessly vigilant as a weasel or a fox; nothing escaped that exquisitely sensitive perception; yet he looked all the time as if he were asleep. It was said long ago—it would be about the year '54, I think—that Sir Edwin Landseer had sent two pictures to the Exhibition which the Hanging Committee, in compliance with the rule of the Academy prohibiting the introduction of political topics, had been compelled to reject. The pictures represented "Free Trade" and "Protection." I forget what animal was selected to represent the genius of unrestricted competition,—possibly a group of Chicago pigs suffering from trichinosis (only the trichina was a later invention); but in a forlorn and emaciated donkey—and the venerable quadruped bore a curious resemblance to Mr Disraeli—the principle of restriction received appropriate recognition. It is a pity, perhaps, that the Academy were so scrupulous; for in no other form could the remarkably hanging and drooping expression of his face and figure have been more aptly rendered. It was from this peculiarity, I fancy, that he always conveyed to the onlooker the notion of a man utterly bored. It is possible, of course, that these dramatic contrasts added to the ultimate effect. At all events there was something curiously calculated to arrest attention in hearing this man utter, in the presence of an august historical assembly, and in a manner languid and insipid beyond belief, the most felicitous subtleties of a critical intellect—the plainest and most lucid expositions of public law and national policy—the coldest, most bitter, direct, searching, and contemptuous irony that our mother-tongue is capable of conveying.

There can be no reasonable doubt now that Mr Disraeli was a born leader. He belonged to the select class who are really capable of *ruling*. There are not many, in any age, to whom that supreme faculty has been accorded; and day by day their number is diminishing. We may call such a man Machiavelli or Mephistopheles; we may say that his aims are selfish, and that his instruments are base; but, at all events, his leadership is a real thing and not a sham. The magnetism which charms men into obedience is one of the rarest of gifts—too fine and impalpable for scientific analysis. And yet without it, in any real crisis, the world would be badly off. For it is better to have a bad government than no government at all—the existence of any government proving that the sense of order, at least, is not dead in the nation; and sheer anarchy being the most hopeless of conditions. And this was the feeling which was growing among the masses in this country when they saw how politicians failed to settle the question of Reform. The dealings of the House of Commons with the question of the franchise were bringing the Monarchy into disrepute. At length, Mr Disraeli said "This question *must* be settled;" and quietly, steadily,—watchful and imperturbable as the Sphinx in Tenniel's wonderful cartoon—he settled it. I don't inquire now whether it was a good or bad settlement; but a settlement of any sort was an argument in favour of the Monarchy. After all, this Constitutional Government of ours was able to *do* something, not merely to *talk* about doing it. And as any Government is better than none, so it is better, I take it, to be governed by a real governor (though indifferently honest) who understands his work, than by a sham governor—however eloquent and exemplary, in other respects, the sham may be. Who has not felt, of late years, that most of our so-called rulers were accidental fixtures only—that there was no true congruity between them and the business which they had undertaken? Lord Palmerston, no doubt, had some of the superficial elements in his nature which go to form a ruler; and with calm seas and fair skies, he really was great in his own light, dexterous way; but to a man like Disraeli, of sedate yet daring temper and boundless resource, not to be compared for a day. We have plenty of fluent orators left; but put them side by side with Disraeli, and we find that it is the Tory chief who bears a family likeness to

those great practical politic kings of men (as distinguished from the mere *talkers*) on whom, in Eöthen's words, "the strong vertical light of Homer's poetry falls."

That a real leader must be more or less of a poet is a proposition that Mr Carlyle would possibly have controverted. But it is true, nevertheless. Mr Disraeli was a poet, in the sense that he possessed a powerful imaginative faculty;—not the imagination, it may be, which blossoms into poetry—into rhythm and ordered music; but the imagination which fires and kindles the intellect. A fantastic, ill-regulated imagination leads men astray; but true imagination, exalting and exciting yet disciplining the mind, strengthens all its faculties. There is a visionary asceticism, no doubt, which reaches deep down into the life, and touches with its grotesque and whimsical colours every mood of the mind. Mr Disraeli's romance, on the contrary, was the mere by-play of his intellect, and did not disturb his working powers—his shrewdness, his sound sense, his knowledge of men. The grosser sort of mortals will not believe that a really practical politician can be a dreamer or a visionary. But this astutest of politicians was on one side of his mind an idealist; and hence no small measure of his power. Hence a certain loftiness of temper, which those who knew him best instinctively recognise without being able exactly to define; hence that decisive insight into character which sent a simple colonel of engineers to lead the English army in its brilliant dash upon the remote stronghold of King Theodore; hence that felicity of epithet, that choice use of words, that "distinction" of style, in which he excelled all contemporary speakers.

Speaking generally, an imaginative man is a magnanimous man; for the larger vision of the poet is incompatible with parochial pettiness. This was eminently the case with Disraeli; his temper was sweet, and he was neither spiteful nor malignant. Yet, men who were too dense and stupid to meet him in fair fight were always harping, parrot-like, on his vindictiveness. The fine edge of his intellect scared them, and they ran away exclaiming that the blow which they could not turn was foul. But what candid friend, with the best intentions, has succeeded in producing any specific act of meanness or baseness? He hit hard; there were times when he asked no quarter and gave none; but still, upon the whole,

he was a magnanimous foe, who fought above-board, who looked his enemy in the face, who was not treacherous. "He never feared the face of man;" and there are no traces in any part of his career of the *tricks* to which the coward resorts.

For, after all is said, one of the most noticeable qualities of Mr Disraeli's intellect was its *fairness*. He was unfanatical. This neutrality of his seems to me to have sprung directly or indirectly from the ideality of which I have spoken. But whatever was the cause, the fact, I think, will not be disputed, except by the partisans who cannot see that the fine shafts of his irony were never dipped in the gall of malice or passion. At the head of a hot-tempered party stood a great neutral figure, supremely fair, tolerant, and impartial—it might be, as his enemies said, supremely indifferent.

But was the insinuation true—was it the fact that he wore his principles lightly? Most of us have what we call our principles, the sort of spiritual habit into which we were born; which we wear as we wear our clothes; and the continued reception of which does not imply any serious intellectual assent. That is one class of principles,—Mr Disraeli's unselfish loyalty to his race, for instance, was a principle belonging to a very different class. For the principle of Jewish enfranchisement he encountered much unmerited ridicule and invective; for it he was content deliberately to relinquish the highest object of his ambition. Surely *that* was a principle tenaciously adhered to and strenuously vindicated—bearing a much more direct and intimate relation to his life than "principles" commonly do. Mr Disraeli, it is true, was not so oppressively serious as the modern Radical is. But the modern Radical would be a greater man if he could laugh at a joke—especially at a joke against himself. Holding that political and financial arrangements are very much matter of time and chance, Mr Disraeli, on the other hand, could not elevate a tax into an article of faith, or the tax-gatherer into a minister of religion. And hence his "levity" was the cause of much very virtuous reprobation.

That there was an immense fund of gaiety in Mr Disraeli's nature is true. Like old James Carlyle of Ecclefechan, he "never looked back." He did not indulge in unavailing regrets. He accepted the inevitable with unshaken composure. He would not allow blunders and miscarriages and misfortunes

to touch him over keenly. He kept them at arm's length—his spirit was not to be clouded and stifled by the too close pressure of calamity. The gaiety was quite spontaneous; at times it had to be held in check; though even in solemn public assemblies, the mocking spirit of Puck (as in the assault on Lord Shaftesbury and his broad phylacteries) would sometimes break loose. When in Edinburgh during 1867, he had a great and enthusiastic reception from the democracy. "We did not go to bed till quite late," he said next morning. "Mrs Disraeli and I were so delighted with our meeting, that we danced a Scotch reel" (or was it an Irish jig?) "over it in our bedroom."

Of the dauntless courage of the man it is unnecessary to speak. He did not know what timidity or weakness meant,—the careless audacities and surprises of his policy, indeed, implying the possession of a temper that was above fear. The speculative intrepidity which gives a peculiar charm to his books was thus the native language of a character which in the most absolute sense was self-reliant. A great critic has said that Byron was a pure elemental force in English poetry; in the same sense, we may say that Disraeli was a pure elemental force in English politics. No man was less under the sway of current influences. The authority of contemporary opinion did not enslave him as it does most of us. Of all our politicians he was the only one who dared to be eccentric. He never quailed from first to last. His earlier works and speeches were characterised by a spirit of serene audacity which, even when most wildly inconsistent, was not wanting in a certain reckless fidelity. *Coningsby*, *Sybil*, and *Tancred* are the finished and artistic elaborations of a mature intellect: but they are conceived in a spirit as daring and intrepid. In the earlier, an ardent imagination ran riot; in the later, the imagination gives animation to the narrative and brilliancy to the invective, but Pegasus is no longer permitted to take the bit between his teeth and bolt with his rider. The last scene of all was equally characteristic. On the night of his death, after a violent spasm of breathlessness, he lay back murmuring in a low voice, "I am overwhelmed." Yet, a little later, "he raised himself from the pillows which supported him, threw back his arms, expanded his chest, and his lips were seen to move as if he was about to speak." To the friends who were at his side, the gesture was

familiar—it was thus that he rose in the House of Commons to reply to Gladstone, to Bright, to Russell, to Palmerston, to Peel. He was not beaten—he would not give in—he was still eager for the fray.

And it is to be noted that while he was not moved by the jeers and taunts of his foes, he was always able to resist—what is far more difficult to resist—the reproaches of his friends. He had to "educate" his party up to his own level, and full-grown men do not take their education easily. There can be no doubt, for instance, that a large majority of the Tory squires shared the opinion of Mr Gladstone—that Jefferson Davis had created a people. But Mr Disraeli remained incredulous: he had no belief in the creative force of anarchy; the unity of America was an idea that appealed directly to his imagination; and, when the secret history of these years is written, it will be found that his firmness mainly contributed to the preservation of friendly relations with our kinsmen across the sea.

It was impossible that the literary expression of a man so gifted, whether in the senate or in the closet, whether with tongue or pen, could be otherwise than fine. It has been the fashion, all along, to speak slightingly of Mr Disraeli's novels. I cannot agree with the verdict, which seems to me essentially superficial. There can, I think, be no doubt that the later novels—not *Lothair* and *Endymion*, which were written when the pen had been laid aside too long to be resumed with perfect freedom and mastery, but *Coningsby*, *Sybil*, and *Tancred*—disclose a supreme literary faculty of its kind. There are often, no doubt, curiously immature passages in Mr Disraeli's writings—passages of laboured and tawdry rhetoric, which are brought into unfortunate and undesirable prominence by the airy finish and eminent exactness of the setting. But such passages are rare in *Coningsby;* and in *Sybil* and *Tancred*[1] there is all the

[1] The critics said at the time that in *Tancred* a failure of power was manifest. It has, I think, less sparkle, but more humour. Upon the whole, it is to my mind—especially throughout its Eastern scenes (vivid and splendid as an Arabian sky)—the most enjoyable of the series. There is a sort of spiritual riot about that eccentric pilgrimage, and a soft breezy laughter is evolved by the incongruities of Eastern life, which with infinite zest, picturesqueness, and colour, it depicts—its splendour and its squalor, its eternal memories and its petty intrigues, Eva cherishing in solitude the lofty traditions of her race, and Fakradeen living upon the excitement or (perhaps one might say) the *interest* of his debts.

mellowness of consummate work. Mr Arnold complains (not unjustly) of "the hard metallic movement" of Macaulay. But there is no hard metallic movement, but only the soft play of life, in that gay dialogue of Disraeli's—which indeed is finer than Congreve's. Then, the irony of the novels is as delicate and incisive as the irony of the speeches—the implied and constructive irony which is the last refinement of banter, of which we see no sign in the emphatic satire of Dryden, only an occasional trace in the balanced invective of Bolingbroke and Pope, but which bursts into perfect flower in the serious books of Thackeray, and the satirical speeches of Disraeli. And the character-sketches are almost perfect in their way—painted with a force and clearness that has seldom been surpassed. One figure especially is worked out with pitiless consistency and untiring scorn; Taper, Tadpole, Mrs Guy Flouncey, Count Mirabel, and the rest, might have been drawn by Congreve or Sheridan; the blustering baseness of Rigby is worthy of Ben Jonson alone.

The literary excellence of the *speeches* is quite as remarkable. Such airy quizzing, such good-natured banter, such brilliant *chaff*, was never before heard in the House of Commons. The invective against Sir Robert Peel is somewhat overdone, perhaps; but the lighter sketches of Wood, and Russell, and Palmerston, are inimitable; and it may confidently be affirmed, as I have said elsewhere, that in the fine but dangerous science of parliamentary fence, Mr Disraeli has had no rival since Bolingbroke.

It may be true, it *is* true, that the eloquence of the demagogue—meaning thereby the eloquence of the man who can sway the *demos* by the magic of consummate speech—was not within the reach of Disraeli. It is notorious, however, that the strongest men fail as he did, and for the same reason. The magic which bewitches the multitude is (so to speak) the melody of the Æolian harp,—it is the *wind* itself incarnated into articulate music. So that the men who wield it are generally deficient in native insight, in independent force, in tough moral fibre; and their golden words remind us less of the Sermon on the Mount than of the Song of the Lurlei,—the voice whose fatal sweetness, in union with no responsible will, lures men, to their destruction, into the depths.

That Disraeli's speaking raised the tone of the House of

Commons, which before his time was growing *slovenly*, is generally admitted now. He showed it that the weapons of the old orators had not lost their cunning; that wit and ridicule, and choice words, and the fire of genius, were still potent factors in human affairs. Already, indeed, the House of Commons is not what it was when he left it. That light gleaming weapon of his—so dainty, so airy, so impalpable, and yet so deadly,—not only silenced rudeness and violence; it made such things impossible. They were forced to admit that they were vulgar, incongruous, and out of place; and they slunk away to more congenial haunts. But now the bores and the pedants and the obstructionists have taken heart of grace; and after nights of confused clamour, when patience and reticence, and self-respect and self-restraint, have been cast off like an old cloak, not alone from the members of the Opposition will the cry be heard—"Oh for one hour of Disraeli!"[1]

[1] It is difficult to determine whether Mr Disraeli's best work (looked at merely from a critical and literary point of view) is to be found in his speeches or in his books—whether he is a writer who has accidentally turned speaker, or a speaker who has accidentally turned writer. I have never greatly admired the early Protectionist speeches in which he assailed Sir Robert: they are splendidly impertinent and audacious, and we know that Sir Robert did not like them; but the invective is laboured, and the irony is not incisive but simply savage. The picture altogether is as black as one of Rembrandt's etchings; the delicate tints, the natural play of light and shadow, having been omitted. There are many scenes and dialogues and characters in the novels that are vastly superior to this portrait of Sir Robert, much as it was applauded in its day; but I do not think there is anything, even in *Coningsby*, quite equal to the refined and brilliant banter of Lord Palmerston, Lord John Russell, Sir Charles Wood, and other House of Commons men whose names are passing away, which is to be found in Mr Disraeli's later speeches. Caricatures more or less, no doubt, but caricatures by a man who has a naturally fine eye for the nicest traits of character. They are wonderfully true, and yet to some extent ideal, like the cartoons that Richard Doyle used to contribute in the old days to *Punch*. Let any idle admirer of Mr Disraeli collect the lightly touched, wittily conceived sketches which may be gleaned from the speeches delivered by the leader of the Opposition between 1848 and 1858, and he will bring together a striking gallery of historical portraits, far more true to the life than historical portraits commonly are.

Mr Disraeli confessed in the preface to the fifth edition of *Coningsby* that,—"It was not originally the intention of the writer to adopt the form of fiction as the instrument to scatter his suggestions, but, after reflection, he resolved to avail himself of a method which, in the temper

So much for the man; what, then, were the principles which inspired the whole of his public life, and which explain, more or less completely, its apparent and admitted inconsistencies? The cardinal articles of his creed were—(1) that it is the *character* of a nation which makes and keeps it great; and (2) that it is the first business of a statesman to wage war against the evil

of the times, offered the best chance of influencing opinion." This confession has been taken advantage of by the critics—somewhat unwarrantably, as it appears to me. It is true that Mr Disraeli's novels are in one sense brilliant essays on politics: but it is equally true that they are first-rate romances, abounding in amusing narrative, in sparkling dialogue, in vivid delineations of life. The reputation that they are political is of course against them: the most ardent readers of romance are not, as a rule, ardent politicians; and it is difficult to persuade the public that a man who writes a novel which is avowedly political, can be at once witty and wise. But the truth is that (apart altogether from the political philosophy which they propound) *Coningsby*, *Sybil*, *Tancred*, and the others, abound in passages that are worthy of Congreve or Sheridan, and that have as fair a claim to immortality as the best passages in *The Double Dealer* or *The School for Scandal*.

It was not to be expected, indeed, that such novels could attain a popularity equal to, or of the kind enjoyed by, the writings of Mr Dickens, Mr Thackeray, or Sir Walter Scott. Dickens and Thackeray are essentially social writers, whereas the interest which Mr Disraeli excites is to a great extent an intellectual interest only. *They* deal with men as such—*he* deals with men chiefly on the political side. Their compass is as wide as the reach of human joy or human misery; his are to a certain extent class-novels—the books of the privileged caste who minister before the ark of the Constitution, and which require a glossary for the uninitiated. *Henrietta Temple*, indeed, is the finest of love-stories, and will be read by those who are in love, and by those who have been in love, with endless enjoyment. But the three great novels—*Coningsby*, *Sybil*, *Tancred*—are mainly political; the social sketches, though inimitable as sketches, being kept in strict subordination to the delineations of political life and political character and thought.

Regarding these novels in a more closely critical spirit, I should be disposed to say that they display marked intellectual intrepidity, and an unusually fine insight into character—daring speculation and Dutch-like observation—presented in apt, delicate, and felicitous language. In such terms a critic would be inclined to characterise certain of Bolingbroke's writings—such as his description of the Pretender's Court at Commercy—and in truth there is considerable resemblance between Mr Disraeli and the "all-accomplished" St John. Some of Bolingbroke's sketches of character are almost as incisive as Mr Disraeli's; and the declamatory invective of both has seldom been rivalled—an invective which never degenerates into the language of scolding, but is tranquil and discriminating even in its passion. St John's speculative

habits and the false opinions which by sapping and enfeebling the national character, produce cowardice, corruption, and effeminacy. But the statesman's functions do not end here,—it is necessary, moreover, that a high conception of national duties and national responsibilities should be maintained among the people. In short, the preservation of our position as one of the governing races of mankind was—from first to last—the *motive* of his political career.

It was, he considered, the vice of the time that these cardinal principles of statesmanship had been lost sight of by our rulers. The extension of education was the panacea of one set of politicians; the extension of the suffrage of another set; the disestablishment of the Church of a third; the adoption of the ballot of a fourth; and so on. Now, in Mr Disraeli's view, all this was beside the mark. Mr Lowe had said that an uneducated people was unfit to govern itself,—which was true in certain technical senses; but, after all, character was greater than culture. Education was immensely important, no doubt; but education would never make a people great, if the national character was weak and unstable. The capacity for greatness must run in the blood of the people, as it had run in the Greek, the Hebrew, the Roman, and the Teutonic races. Mr Disraeli had confidence in the character of the English people, to whatever station they belonged. We had been a great, reasonable, moderate, moral people for a good many hundred years past; and the weight, and gravity, and deliberate justice of our national character had always and would always control our legislation. The idea of the delirious levities of a French Revolution being transacted among ourselves, was one which he could not realise. If we did come to revolution, we would

faculty was as bold as Disraeli's; both of them delighting in those mental feats which are the amusement of men who are partly poets and partly logicians. Perfectly fearless and perfectly frank, they try conclusions without being a bit afraid of breaking their necks. All this is due to a certain large and tolerant habit of mind—the imperial as distinct from the parochial temper. Mr Disraeli was too fond of epigram to make an absolutely philosophical writer; but there is an immense deal of really striking thinking in his writings. His detractors are constantly exclaiming, "This is paradox"—which is true perhaps; but then it is paradox which could have been started only by a man of real intellectual force. It is the paradox of a highly inventive and self-reliant intellect.

accomplish it, soberly and gravely,—"sadly" as Froissart says, "after the manner of our countrymen." We might be reasonably certain at least, that even household suffrage would not induce the lower to chop off the heads of the upper classes—could not possibly lead to Robespierre and the guillotine. "For my part I have faith in the people of England—in their genius, and in their destiny."

But it appeared to Mr Disraeli, when he entered public life, that the national character was in grave peril. The mean modern spirit was infecting and contaminating the high spirit of the past. England was ceasing to be the England of Elizabeth, of Cromwell, of Chatham, of Pitt. The maxim of buying in the cheapest market and selling in the dearest had supplanted the old heroic watchwords of a people who could not brook defeat, and who had withstood a world in arms. The high spirit of an imperial race, without which, as Burke had said, "your army would be a mob, and your ships no better than rotten timber," had been enfeebled by success. The generous ideals of a great nation had been buried out of sight, and the people were being taught that to vote at elections and to make money as fast as possible were the conditions of national happiness. In Disraeli's view this teaching was radically unsound. England would fall as Tyre had fallen, as Venice had fallen, if the sordid maxims of the money-market were permitted to replace the wider conceptions of national wellbeing which our forefathers had cherished. So he would have the nation touched to finer issues—he would appeal to the imagination, the loyalty, the religion, the venerable traditions, the obedient valour of a great race; and, drawing assurance from the past, would seek security for the future. This was Disraeli's conception of the New Crusade, which he and his friends were to undertake; and which, of course, could only be worked out in this country through a parliamentary career. It was necessary, therefore, that he should attach himself to one of the great political parties; and, on the whole, even on the showing of their opponents, the high spirit of the English of Agincourt and the Armada was best represented by the party which, within living memory, had been led by Canning and by Pitt.

Now, if we keep this key-note steadily before us, I do not think that we shall find much difficulty in disposing of most of the worst charges that have been brought against Mr Disraeli.

1. The youthful affinity with Radicalism may, on one side, as he has pointed out in the letter already quoted,[1] be traced to his antipathy to the Whigs. To the hard, dry, unimaginative Whigs he had no doubt a mortal dislike. Their solemn fumbling with difficult questions had the same effect on him that the "somject" and "omject" of poor old Coleridge had on Carlyle. The Whig nobles were to his mind a modern edition of the Venetian oligarchy in its decline, and their conceptions of the scope of national life were as bare, meagre, and barren. Nor to youthful enthusiasm does the *Civitas Dei*, which Radicalism seeks to reach, appear so hopelessly far away;—it is later in life that we discover that the Holy City is far less accessible than we had fancied. But it is pretty clear that the moment Disraeli found out what economical Radicalism meant, as embodied in the persons of Joseph Hume and his friends, he beat a speedy retreat from their camp. *That*, at all events, was not Jerusalem.

It is not at all surprising, indeed, looking to his early schooling, or lack of schooling, that his first essays in practical politics should have been somewhat erratic. He was hardly a child of our prosaic England,—either by temperament or by training. The public school and the University knew him not. Sole sitting by the shores of old Romance—at Venice, at Damascus, on the plain of Troy, in the Desert—he had worked out the puzzles of life according to his own lights, and had rehearsed a career. He was intoxicated with youth, with genius, with the memories of the past that were round about him, with his own vivid sense of the future that was in store for him. What a life!—passion and poetry tempered by epigram; but scarcely a fit preparation for a seat on a back bench of the House of Commons, or for a steady-going hack in official harness.

2. But, if he naturally gravitated to the Tories, as the only possible party to which he could ally himself, it must have been clear from the first that any cordial alliance between Sir Robert Peel and this brilliant dreamer was out of the question. It has been said that he was willing enough to serve under Peel,—which is probably true enough. He knew the conditions of public life in England, and would have worked with Peel as with others. But it would have been against the grain; for the antagonism between the two men was vital. Disraeli was,

[1] See the Preface to this volume.

in certain moods, as much a Bohemian as Heine; and Peel was a Philistine of the Philistines. The rupture between the timid Harley and the daring Bolingbroke was, in the nature of things, not more inevitable. Sooner or later, it must have been war to the knife. How was agreement possible between the pure naked intellectual force of Disraeli and the timid empiricism of Sir Robert? And Disraeli had his special grievance—Sir Robert had infected the party which he led with his own timidity. That party, as we have seen, was identified with the high spirit and the masterful traditions of England; but, under the manipulation of Peel, it had come to be only a weak reflection of the faction which it opposed. It resisted change; but only in a deprecatory half-hearted way. It could not deny that Catholic Emancipation, Reform, Irish Disestablishment, were all good things in their way—though not to be had just yet, or until the pressure was a little more severe. It was thus a negation of policy—"a sort of humdrum hocus-pocus in which the Order of the Day was moved to take in a nation." The merciless severity of the attack on Sir Robert has been often reprobated; but, after all, it proceeded on intellectual and not on personal lines. It was the intellectual poverty of the policy which roused his scorn. A statesman?—why, a statesman was a man who connected himself with some great idea, not a man who trimmed his course according to the weather. Such a man was as much a great statesman as the man who got up behind a carriage was a great whip. In all the dreary pages of Sir Robert's interminable talk reported in "Hansard," there was not a single happy expression, nor a single original thought—his whole life, indeed, had been one great Appropriation Clause. And now, he had found the Whigs bathing, and had run away with their clothes! But his parliamentary tactics were even more paltry. Whenever he had a big measure to introduce, he was sure to rest it on the smallest precedents; he was always tracing the steam-engine back to the tea-kettle; in fact, all his precedents were "tea-kettle" precedents. Of course the charge of betraying his friends was urged more than once; but even Sir Robert's warmest admirers could not deny that he had deserted his party. Like the Turkish Admiral, who after being embraced by the Sultan and prayed for by the muftis, he had steered his fleet straight into the enemy's port. The Turkish admiral, to be sure, had been much misunderstood and

misrepresented. He, too, had been called a traitor. But he vindicated his conduct. He said—"True it is, I did place myself at the head of this valiant armada—true that my sovereign embraced me, and that all the muftis in the kingdom prayed for the success of the expedition. But I had an objection to war; I saw no use in prolonging the struggle; and the only reason for my accepting the leadership was, that I might terminate the contest by betraying my master." This is pungent and incisive criticism no doubt; but does it exceed the licence of fair parliamentary invective? Sir Robert was wounded to the quick: he winced visibly under the attacks, and spoke of them "in moments too testy for so great a man to indulge in." But the scorn was perfectly genuine; the satire, though direct and cutting, was entirely impersonal; and the mute reproach of a party which felt that it had been betrayed was sure to find expression sooner or later. *Si tu oblitus es, at Dii meminerunt, meminit Fides.* But it was certainly unlucky for Sir Robert that the greatest master of irony in our tongue should have been in Parliament at the time.

3. What has been already said will explain the attitude of Mr Disraeli to the doctrines of the Manchester economists. Free trade might or might not be in accordance with the immutable laws which govern the universe; but it was quite clear to his mind that a school which ostentatiously aspired to make England the market-place of the world, and nothing more, had misread the lessons of history. Nations do not live on bread alone; and the politicians who proclaimed that material prosperity was better worth living for than heroic ideas, were sapping the springs of national greatness. "I see no reason why you, too, should not fade like the Tyrian dye, and moulder like the Venetian palaces."

4. That Mr Disraeli should, by the Reform Bill of 1867, have introduced household suffrage, is sometimes considered the crowning proof of his want of principle. We have seen that there was no particular reason why Reform should be considered the exclusive preserve of the Whigs. Nor was there any reason why the Tory party in 1867 should have been anxious to abide by the tentative settlement of 1832. That settlement had given the government to their rivals; during the thirty-five years that had elapsed they had not been in office for seven. Many of the ablest of the party, moreover, had objected to

Reform, not on grounds of principle, but because they held that a continual *tinkering*, an annual disturbance of the Constitution, was inconvenient and dangerous. These men had maintained that, in the meantime, the suffrage should be left untouched, but that when a change became inevitable, it was for the interest of the nation that a permanent settlement should be effected; and at any figure below household suffrage they found no principle of permanence. Nor can it be denied that throughout his whole political career Mr Disraeli had held this view. He held that the settlement of 1832 was a Whig settlement; that it had swept away the early popular franchises; that the old alliance between the country party and the people should, if possible, be restored. "If the Tory party is not a national party, it is nothing." All this is on record; and the reader who will turn to the debates on the first Reform Bill will find that Sir Robert Peel, in somewhat different words, had even then said the same thing. Neither the leaders nor the party they led can, in this view, be fairly accused of immorality when, in 1867, perceiving that Reform had become a State necessity, they boldly determined to *settle* the question—for a generation at least. The time had come when a calculated rashness, an intrepid and generous confidence, constituted the truest prudence.

But to Mr Disraeli such a change was acceptable on other grounds. The stolid Ten-Pounder, in whom the franchise had been vested, was of all classes in the country the least accessible to ideas. There might be danger in the "leap in the dark;" but, to leave the future of the country in the hands of men who present (in Mr Arnold's words) "a defective type of religion, a narrow range of intellect and knowledge, a stunted sense of beauty, and a low standard of manners," was certain death. If it be true that political institutions rest on national character, an institution resting on a character like *that* was obviously in a very hopeless condition. It is possible that Mr Disraeli, with his immense conviction of the importance of character to a nation, may have entertained an undue contempt for the working machinery of the constitution. Political arrangements and contrivances were valuable in his eyes only in so far as they enabled the classes which were most accessible to the idea of national greatness to wield political power. In this sense he was the most radical of our statesman: a £10 franchise, a £5

franchise, household suffrage, manhood suffrage—what did it matter, so long as the end was attained?

5. It has been said, indeed, that his policy towards Ireland was exceptionally feeble and colourless. On the contrary, it seems to me to have been the only policy that of late years has had any chance of success. We have been governing Ireland for some time according to "Irish ideas," and we are beginning to reap what we have sown. A very plentiful harvest of "Irish ideas" is now in the market. But according to Mr Disraeli's view, Ireland was an imperfectly civilised country, in which every germ of civilisation needed to be vigilantly guarded. "What always strikes me as a general principle with regard to Ireland is, *that you should create and not destroy.*" The logic of Lord Macaulay on the Irish Church question, for instance, might be absolutely unanswerable; but there were deeper issues involved than logic would solve. If we destroyed the Irish Church, we destroyed an organisation which not only restrained the fanaticism, but stimulated the culture, of an imperfectly developed society. "Religious equality" was a plausible, if ambiguous, watchword; but religious equality in Ireland meant religious intemperance, religious anarchy, religious riot. The Irish Church, from the peculiarities of its position, had become in many districts simply a lay institution devoted to charitable and unsectarian purposes. The parson in such communities was nothing more than an Irish or English gentleman—better educated, less fanatical, more liberal-handed than his neighbours; and "Protestant ascendancy" meant only the natural ascendancy of skill and energy and intelligence over ignorance and indolence and superstition — the inevitable ascendancy of strong, sensible, God-fearing men. At the same time the Catholic Church itself was another bulwark against the anarchy of barbarism; and its ministers should have been attached to the State by the ties of interest and gratitude. "So, also, I looked then, as I look now, to a reconciliation between the Tory party and the Roman Catholic subjects of the Queen. I have never relinquished my purpose, and have now, I hope, nearly accomplished it." It is a thousand pities that he failed. For the rest, he would have sent a "Lord High Deputy" across the Channel with "full powers," and instructions to give every man justice, and justice only,—justice meted out with inexorable impartiality,—justice that cordially en-

couraged virtue, sobriety, industry, thrift,—justice that sternly repressed mendacity, anarchy, self-indulgence.

6. The foreign policy of Lord Beaconsfield between 1876 and 1880 was, in point of fact, the realisation on a great scale of all his previous teaching. England had been effaced in Continental Europe; she was again to speak with the voice of Chatham and of Pitt. The stimulating inspiration of Imperial duties and Imperial responsibilities was again to appeal to the conscience of the people.

That Mr Disraeli was "un-English" was the monotonous refrain of Mr Grant Duff's vacation soliloquies. "Mr Disraeli is an Englishman because he will, not because he must. His outer life is identified with ours, but his inner life belongs to another race and to another history. All English politics are to him only a game." But, seriously speaking, the kind of talk which made Mr Disraeli a sort of Bedouin sheik who had just stepped out of the desert into our drawing-rooms, scarcely deserves the name of criticism. The critic who fancies that a man whose father and grandfather were English citizens cannot be an Englishman because he has a dash of alien blood in his veins, must know little of ethnology. It is possible, indeed, that such a man may not be so insular in his prejudices as a Cumberland squire. He is by race, perhaps, more a citizen of the world. But it is clear, looking to his whole career, that Mr Disraeli was inspired throughout by a sense of the greatness of England; that the spectacle of this famous, historical, world-wide dominion fascinated his imagination; and that, in his foreign as in his domestic policy, he was animated by no mean or unworthy ambition, but by the profound conviction that he was adding to her security and her renown.

The Imperial and the Parochial types of character have always been sharply opposed; and, in the meantime, the former is under a cloud. The policy of "brag and bluster" has been succeeded by one which is supposed to be better adapted to the necessities of commerce. Whether the one or the other will best secure the ultimate wellbeing of the empire is a question that need not now be discussed. The opinion of Europe, indeed, has been already expressed in no measured terms. "Brag and bluster!" said the Regierungsrath of Sauerkraut to me a year ago,[1] as we were sailing up the Königsee: "Brag and

[1] Autumn of 1879.

bluster! And why not? What is the good of appealing to a polar bear in honeyed accents? Brag and bluster, indeed! Don't you see, mein guter freund, that these were the only arguments the barbarians could understand? If the clamour of vindictive philanthropy had not drowned and discredited the plain speaking of your Prime Minister, the Czar would have thought once, twice, and thrice before he started for Constantinople. To philander with philanthropy may be a cheap amusement in quiet times; but when a hundred thousand lives are sacrificed to its cultivation, it becomes a costly and poisonous luxury. The sinister forces with which he had to contend may have proved too strong for Lord Beaconsfield; foreign foes and domestic faction may have prevented him from doing all that he designed; but in a great world-crisis he bore himself steadfastly, patiently, strenuously, heroically; and he imparted his own spirit to England. And more than that, mein herr, much more if your people had but known it, your patriot minister, in his struggle with the barbarian, had all free Europe at his back."

So far the Regierungsrath of Sauerkraut; but the Regierungsrath is only a German Liberal, and not an English Radical. The British Radical knows better; his animosity to Imperialism is unappeased and unappeasable; and even in the grave his victims are not safe. At all events, the proposal to erect a monument to Benjamin Disraeli in that historic temple of our race, "where kings and poets lie," ought not to have been entertained. The nice susceptibilities of the gentlemen below the gangway should have been consulted. Well, it does not much matter to us, or to—*him*. He has a more lasting monument in the heart of England; and the memory of a great career will outlive the bronze and marble of the Abbey.

> "His voice is silent in your council hall
> For ever; and, whatever tempests lour,
> For ever silent; even if they broke
> In thunder, silent; yet remember all
> He spoke among you, and the Man who spoke."

VIGNETTES.

MOSTLY FROM LIFE.

—o—

WILLIAM BLAKE.

BORN, 1757. DIED, 1827.

THE *involuntariness* of poetic genius is its final and most rudimentary characteristic; and hence we speak of *inspiration*—when the writer is taken possession of by a power above and superior to him; when he becomes the mere mouthpiece of thoughts which have been poured into him as water into a fountain—as a divine gift. Now the eager, feverish, inquiring attitude of the modern imagination is inconsistent and irreconcilable with the state of mind in which the whispers of the still small voice may be heard. Wordsworth complains of our untiring inquisitiveness, "as if nothing of itself will come, but we must still be seeking;" and recommends those who would be truly wise, who desire to retain undisturbed and unbroken the reflections which nature casts upon their minds, to cultivate "a wise passiveness." William Blake suggests a similar lesson when he says,—

> "He who bends to himself a joy,
> Does the winged life destroy:
> But he who kisses the joy as it flies,
> Lives in Eternity's sunrise."

The toys of the imagination, the playthings of the fancy, are very brittle. You cannot trap them any more than you can

trap a sunbeam. They will not submit to be analysed or systematised, to be experimented upon and dissected. Do not seek to grasp them, therefore; let them hide among the thick-leaved flowers, or flit through the solemn twilight. Then, perchance, they may leave a scent of their fragrance, a ripple of their glory, behind them—in the vision and on the page of the poet.

And what is true of the poetic is true also of the religious life. I love the writings of the English mystics—meaning thereby such men as Henry More, and Lord Herbert of Cherbury, and Samuel Taylor Coleridge. There are times when I cannot smile at Lord Herbert's vision when he had finished his *De Veritate;*—"Being thus doubtful in my chamber, one fine day in the summer, my casement being opened towards the south, the sun shining clear, and no wind stirring, I took my book *De Veritate* in my hand, and kneeling on my knees devoutly, said these words:—'O thou Eternal God, author of the lights which now shine upon me, and giver of all inward illuminations, I do beseech Thee, of Thy infinite goodness, to pardon a greater request than a sinner ought to make: I am not satisfied enough whether I ought to publish this book *De Veritate:* if it be for Thy glory I beseech Thee give me some sign from heaven: if not I shall suppress it.' I had no sooner spoken these words, but a loud, though yet gentle noise, came from the heavens (for it was like nothing on earth), which did so comfort and cheer me, that I took my petition as granted, and that I had the sign I demanded, whereupon also I resolved to print my book;"—when I feel that what Sir Thomas Browne says (Coleridge liked the passage so much that he prefixed it to a lay-sermon) is quaintly true—"Methinks there be not impossibilities enough in religion for an active faith; the deepest mysteries ours contain have not only been illustrated, but maintained by syllogism and the rule of reason. I love to lose myself in a mystery, to pursue my reason to an *O Altitudo!* It is my solitary recreation to pose my reason with those involved enigmas and riddles of the Trinity, with incarnation and resurrection. I can answer all the objections of Satan and my rebellious reason, with that odd resolution I learned of Tertullian, *Certum est quia impossibile est.*" In the day-time we may maintain a sceptical complacency; but in the twilight of the spirit, when we stand among the ruins

of our hopes, when visionary shapes flit past us, when the voices of our dearest dead faintly call to us out of the darkness, we must cast ourselves upon our faces, and raise clasped, imploring hands to the invisible and incomprehensible God.

The mystic or the idealist properly belongs to a primitive age; yet he is not unknown even in the nineteenth century. Perhaps at the present moment the recoil from scientific materialism and the tyranny of prigs, is bringing imagination back to its early natural attitude.

In the British Museum, and in the collections of a few artist amateurs (able men many of them, but somewhat eccentric, the world says) may yet be discovered by the curious, certain illustrated poems, "invented and engraved by William Blake." The poetry and the art which illustrates the poetry, are alike remarkable. Remarkable also is the life (it has recently been narrated with quaint force and fire) of this poet-designer. William Blake was among the last of the mystics.

The mystical poems are hard to interpret; but sometimes nothing can excel his crystalline simplicity and transparent naturalness. The shorter compositions are specially excellent. There are several as homely and studiously truthful as Wordsworth's Lyrical Ballads. Others are splendidly coloured,—rich, quaint, and aromatic,—artfully artless, coyly and reluctantly charming, as Elizabethan song. A snatch like this, though obviously unborrowed, has the ring and tone—most particularly, perhaps, in a certain fanciful and playful inconsequence, an inconsequence, however, which is only apparent, for there is a true imaginative connection, however slight, between its several parts—of the snatches of song in the old English Drama.

> "The look of love alarms
> Because 'tis filled with fire;
> But the look of soft deceit
> Shall win the lover's hire.
> Soft deceit and idleness,
> These are beauty's sweetest dress."

This also is out of the Elizabethan mint:—

> "My silks and fine array,
> My smiles and languished air,
> By love are driven away;
> And mournful, lean Despair

Brings me yew to deck my grave:
Such end true lovers have.

His face is fair as heaven
When springing buds unfold;
Oh, why to him was 't given,
Whose heart is wintry cold?
His breast is Love's all-worshipped tomb,
Where all Love's pilgrims come.

Bring me an axe and spade,
Bring me a winding-sheet:
When I my grave have made,
Let winds and tempests beat:
Then down I'll lie, as cold as clay
True love doth pass away!"

The little poem on "The Prince of Love,"—written by a boy twelve years old,—is astonishingly graceful:—

"How sweet I roamed from field to field,
And tasted all the summer's pride,
Till I the Prince of Love beheld,
Who in the sunny beams did glide!

He show'd me lilies for my hair,
And blushing roses for my brow;
He led me through his gardens fair,
Where all his golden treasures grow.

With sweet May dews my wings were wet,
And Phœbus fired my vocal rage;
He caught me in his silken net,
And shut me in his golden cage.

He loves to sit and hear me sing,
Then, laughing, sports and plays with me;
Then stretches out my golden wing,
And mocks my loss of liberty."

The ripest and most matured taste could not have finished this dainty cabinet picture more perfectly. The Prince of Love entraps the warbler,—"Then stretches out the golden wing, and mocks the loss of liberty." The playful wantonness of love could not have been indicated with more entire felicity. This graceful modish conception might have occurred to a finished artist; but a boy's touch is seldom so light, restrained,

and suggestive. Nor was the poet unequal to the more direct and sustained treatment of a subject. Charles Lamb said that his Tiger Song was "glorious." It is so, indeed. It discloses, in its very phraseology even, in its conciseness and its fire, the highest exercise of the imagination. What Titanic hand could have framed, what Titanic brain could have designed, that terrible strength? There are two sides of the picture—the Tiger and its Maker; and while the writer is as it were speculating exclusively on the nature of that "dread grasp which dared thy deadly talons clasp," he contrives to cast a reflected but lurid light on the fierce savage of the jungle, which brings its knitted limbs and awful strength before us with a clearness and definiteness which any direct presentment would have failed to secure.

Then, as an artist, he displays the same imaginative energy and conciseness. There is a union of the highest and most primitive elements in his work. His mere drawing was often archaic and imperfect,—as if, like a child, he had been unacquainted with perspective and the outline of natural objects; but there was a spiritual intensity of expression—"a look as if coming straight from another world,"—which has seldom been put upon any other canvas. Not that there was any affected vagueness or mistiness in his work: well or ill in body, he worked on with singular admirable patience; "grandeur of ideas," he said, "is founded on precision of ideas;" and he held tenaciously to the critical canon which he announced, and which was more novel in his day than in ours. Yet the conflict between the spiritual and the material was sometimes too strong for him; though he strove to render himself intelligible, the form of his ideas is often perplexing and enigmatical; he may be called in some respects the Thomas Carlyle of art. He took the loftiest and least sordid views of his profession. "The man who on examining his own mind finds nothing of inspiration, ought not to dare to be an artist; he *is* a fool and a cunning knave suited to the purposes of evil demons." The Sir Joshuas and the Gainsboroughs, who had made fortunes out of fair faces, had bartered their birthright for a mess of pottage; *he* would be true to his calling—though he starved.

And he did starve—in a fashion. He was essentially a gentleman; but his ill success had been such that he was often reduced to his last shilling. His two small rooms were like

those of an artisan: his clothes were worn and shabby,—"his grey trousers shining in front like a mechanic's." Yet he never rebelled. He had been true to what he esteemed his calling; he was as willing as any martyr to suffer for the truth, as he understood it; but his life could not be called unhappy. In his last years, the worn, tried, neglected man, out of whose eyes, however, the bright Divine light had never faded, could say to a young girl, glorious in her youth and loveliness—"May God make this world to you, my child, as beautiful as it has been to me." A blessing had rested upon him.

Blake's inner spiritual life is a strange problem. Southey got over the difficulty, in the rough-and-ready English fashion, by discovering that he was mad. "This great but insane genius," he calls him. Yet there was consistency in his insanity, method in his madness. His queerest, most out-of-the-way notions were somehow connected with the central principles of his life. He would never study from models,—models "smelt of mortality,"—and the artist was concerned with the spiritual alone. This depreciation of the natural was often expressed by him with vehement and exaggerated emphasis. "Whoever believes in nature disbelieves in God; for nature is the work of the devil." This passage may be compared with not a few in the writings of St Paul. In the view of both, the animal nature of man, "the carnal mind," was disloyal to its Creator. Blake too, like Paul, like Bunyan, had at times joined in fierce spiritual conflicts. Such lines as these might have have been taken from Bunyan's account of his conversion: "For that I cannot live without doing my duty to lay up treasures in heaven is certain and determined, and to this I have long made up my mind. And why this should be made an objection to me, while drunkenness, lewdness, gluttony, and even idleness itself, does not hurt other men, let Satan himself explain. The thing I have most at heart—more than life, or all that seems to make life comfortable without,—is the interest of true religion and science. And whenever anything appears to affect that interest (especially if I myself omit any duty to my station as a soldier of Christ), it gives me the greatest of torments. I am not ashamed, afraid, or averse to tell you what ought to be told—that I am under the direction of messengers from heaven, daily and nightly. But the nature of such things is not, as some suppose, without trouble or care. Temptations

are on the right hand and on the left. Behind, the sea of time and space roars and follows swiftly. He who keeps not right onwards is lost: and if our footsteps slide in clay, how can we do otherwise than fear and tremble? . . . And now let me finish by assuring you that though I have been very unhappy I am so no longer. I am again emerged into the light of day: I still, and shall to eternity, embrace Christianity, and adore Him who is the express image of God; but I have travelled through perils and darkness not unlike a champion. I have conquered and shall go on conquering. Nothing can withstand the fury of my course among the stars of God and in the abysses of the accuser. My enthusiasm is still what it was, only enlarged and confirmed." That there was a taint of madness in Blake's excitement may be true, as it is true that there is a taint of madness in most forms of excitement. His lofty enthusiasm led him across the border-land. He lived in a visionary world; he was visited by spiritual forms; even in his boyhood they had been made visible to him. He had seen them among the trees at even-tide,—their bright wings sparkling, star-like, through the boughs; at morn he had beheld them walking among the reapers. Then by the sea-shore, among the pauses of the waves, he had conversed with majestic shadows,—"grey but luminous, and superior to the common height of men." And they had told him of things which justified his patient bearing, which reconciled the bright-eyed enthusiast, the gentle, fiery-hearted mystic, to penury and neglect. "I am more famed in heaven for my works" he tells a correspondent, quite gravely, "than I could well conceive. In my brain are studies and chambers filled with books and pictures of old which I wrote and painted in ages of eternity before my mortal life: and those works are the delight and study of archangels. Why then should I be anxious about the riches or fame of mortality? The Lord our Father will do with us and for us according to His Divine Will for our good." The spiritual world, in however distorted and fantastic a shape, had come very close to this man. One cannot wonder that with such a temperament, he could never think of death as more than the going out from one room into another. Yet his monomania—if we may so call it—was quite under control, and perfectly reasonable. He could scientifically describe the genesis of his visions. "You have only to work up imagination to the

state of vision, and the thing is done." Imagination worked up to the state of vision may be said to be the condition of genius,—that capacity of seeing, and consequently of recording, which makes the poet different from other men. When "the visions" left him he was powerless, the virtue went out of him, the faculty of invention deserted him. "What do we do then, Kate?" he said, turning to his wife. "We kneel down and pray, Mr Blake." This habitual joining together of the poetic and the theological, of the artist and of the devotee, is the key perhaps to what appear to us the singularities of his character. He recalls the old Spanish painter who over an ill-painted crucifix would prayerfully exclaim,—"Forgive them, Lord, they know not what they do." He was partly a Turner and partly a Simeon Stylites. He was a painter who had experienced the spiritual troubles of a Luther or of a Bunyan. The reformation of the religious life was the product of Luther's struggles, and we do not laugh at *that:* it is because we do not really believe that art is more than an ornament or a plaything, that Blake's "visionary" conceptions of the responsible dignity of his calling are apt to provoke a smile.

LACORDAIRE.

BORN, 1802. DIED, 1861.

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BUT the mystic, though a visionary, need not—therein differing from Blake—be destitute of those qualities which form the man of the world. We have a striking example of this moral and intellectual union in the Abbé Lacordaire, whose life—all things considered—is surely one of the strangest ever written.

Lacordaire, in many respects, was peculiarly a man of the present century. He had sat at the feet of its teachers; he was a student of those forms of thought which we consider characteristically our own. His temper was bold and politic—native shrewdness and a fine sagacity being enwrought with the imaginative texture of his mind. He was a great orator: had he cultivated the gift he might have become a great satirist. Ready, rapid, a master of repartee, his imagination vivid and available—the imagination of the rhetorician rather than of the poet—he would, I fancy, have made a brilliant parliamentary debater. His writings are full of "good things"—whereof here are a few selected almost at random.

An attempt was made when Lacordaire was a young man to compel the French clergy to perform the burial rites over those who had died outside their communion. The youthful priest vehemently resented the aggression. "Are we," he asked, "the grave-diggers of the human race? Have we entered into a compact with it to bury its remains?" One of the Crown lawyers, during Lacordaire's first prosecution, termed the Catho-

lic clergy, "the ministers of a foreign power." "We are the ministers of one who is a foreigner nowhere—of God," was the instant reply. His bold antithetical style—slightly tainted as it is with that striving after surprise, that exaggerated emphasis, and love for verbal paradox which characterises the style of many modern French writers—is yet at times extremely effective. "Some day," he writes to his biographer, "when Montalembert shall have grown grey in the midst of ingratitude and celebrity, he will come and contemplate on my brow the remains of a youth passed together." Of Napoleon he said—"Liberty had forsaken my country, because after great misfortunes God had given France a man greater even than those misfortunes themselves." "When God crushes us under the rod, is it not," he asks in one of his sermons, "with a view that our blood may mingle with his—with his shed long ago under harder and more humiliating strokes?" Of his irony these are average specimens: "Gentlemen," he remarked to certain scoffers at religion, "God has made you witty, very witty indeed, to show you how little he cares for the wit of man." On one occasion, when apologising for having broken one of the severe educational rescripts, he exclaimed bitterly: "When Leonidas died, his epitaph was this—*Passer-by, go and tell Sparta that we died in obedience to her sacred laws.* I should be unwilling, gentlemen, to have this inscription written on my grave; I should be very loath to die for the sacred laws of my country." "If we get a Republic," were his words shortly before 1848, "it would make us die either of laughter or of fright."

Yet this man—brilliant, ready, supple, adroit, meteor-like, diamond-like—has supplied his countrymen with a career on which they may exhaust their vocabulary of antithesis. He combined two types—the rigid mediævalist and the modern demagogue. He was an orator and an ascetic. He was a haughty priest and a champion of the democracy. He was a confessor of nuns and a writer in Liberal journals. He was a brilliant, polished, cultivated Parisian in a shaven head and a white habit. He practised the austerities of the monastic life; but "Brother Henri Domenic Lacordaire of the Friars' Preachers," was the friend of Montalembert, and the correspondent of Guizot. He instinctively recognised these contrasted aspects of his character. "I hope to live and die," he said, "a penitent Catholic and an impenitent Liberal."

There must have been a visionary or transcendental element in the character of such a man. A keenly practical and naturally sceptical intellect was, in his case, united with a mood of vague melancholy and aspiration. Non est magnum ingenium sine melancholia. But he had more than the ordinary melancholy of genius. There is a lofty though restrained pathos about his greatest discourses. "I too hope to marry some day," he writes. "I have a betrothed, lovely, chaste immortal; and our marriage celebrated on earth will be consummated in heaven. I shall never say, *Linquenda domus et placens uxor.*" And again: "I am sad betimes, but who is there who is not so? It is a dart which we must always carry in the soul; we must try not to lean on the side where it is, nor ever dream of taking it out. It is the javelin of Mantinea in the heart of Epaminondas; it is extracted only by death and entrance into eternity." Then with this mood of melancholy he united the passion of the orator. When he was speaking he lost self-control; then, in his own words, "accents are snatched from me which surprise and trouble even myself." In one sense also Lacordaire was a fatalist. His intellect, when dealing with a sharp crisis or an involved issue, was languid and uninventive. He dared not trust himself to cut the knot. "Every man has his day," he would say, "if he only knows how to wait, and not thwart the designs of Providence." Writing to an intimate friend, he confesses—"The questions of this world are so knotty, they present themselves so diversely and contradictorily to different minds, that I consider it a great blessing when they are solved by events independent of the will of man. I have always passionately wished for this sort of solution." These words are obviously used in perfect sincerity, and a man to whom such feelings could become habitual, was undoubtedly in some measure prepared by nature for the career which he selected. He was a Democrat; but his desire for some secure spiritual footing divided him from the brilliant but unbelieving democracy of Paris. "They think themselves the leaders of civilisation, and they are but a horde of Scythians," he said bitterly. He was a Democrat before he was a priest; and he could never have become a priest had he not persuaded himself that the Church was the guardian of liberty and the champion of human rights. His transcendental view of the functions of the Church and the office of the priesthood was thus highly characteristic

and consistent. The priest was the liberator of humanity—the enemy of political tyranny as well as spiritual corruption—a divine and consecrated Reformer. "Others," said the great priest, standing among the victims of the pestilence, "are in a dying state, sightless and dumb. I lay my hands on their brow, and, confiding in the Divine mercy, I utter the words of absolution." It was thus, too, that the Papacy fascinated him. She was desolate and humanly degraded; but that obvious material weakness invested her with a higher imaginative sanctity. "O Rome," he exclaimed, "I did not despise thee, although I saw no kings prostrate at thy gates." This habitual reference to the unseen, this customary appeal to the invisible, is an impressive feature in Lacordaire's life. To *that* tribunal he sends his cause. "Well—since my friend is so unjust, I must expect justice from God alone." Again, with pathetic reticence, "It will be known in heaven whether I have broken vows." The appeal was not entirely rhetorical; for the invisible world was to him a positive and ever-present reality. Death only quickened this habitual impression into intenser expression. His last words were, "My God! open to me, open to me!"

CHARLES JAMES NAPIER.

BORN, 1780. DIED, 1853.

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TO do justice to Sir Charles Napier's merits as a *soldier*, and to the various campaigns in which he was engaged, from Corunna to the Sutlej, does not lie within the scope of my present purpose. All that I am now concerned to show is, that imaginative power stamped his military no less than his civil career. He fought, as he wrote and governed—like a man of genius.

It was an accident that made young Napier a soldier; and he entertained a strong natural antipathy to the military profession. The strictness of its discipline was repugnant to the affluent sympathies of the man, to the liberal instincts of the citizen. And this great master of the art detested bloodshed. He was never at rest except in action; and yet, with his whole heart, he yearned for peace. "Peace, blessed Peace!" is his constant aspiration. When in command of the northern district of England, during the Chartist disturbances in 1840, he could not repress his bitter indignation at the rash levity with which the magistrates were disposed on all occasions to bring the people and the troops face to face; forgetting, as he said, that there was a civil authority between the two, and that the soldier should be appealed to only as an ultimate tribunal, when the police had been tried and failed. All war was hateful to him; but a servile war, a war of classes, would have been misery. "Battle! Victory!" he exclaims, "Oh, spirit-stirring words in the bosom of society! but to me, O God, how my

heart rejects them!" That dreadful work of blood, sickening even to look on; no one feeling of joy or exaltation entered my head at Dubba or Meeanee: all was agony, I can use no better word. A longing never to have quitted Celbridge, to have passed my life in the round field, and the 'devil's acre,' and under the dear yew-trees on the terrace among the sparrows: these were the feelings which flashed in my head after the battles. But away with these feelings! let me go to work, let me sink in harness if so God pleases: he who flinches from work, in battle or out of it, is a coward." Noble old man!

Yet war was his true vocation. If ever any one was born for war, Charles Napier was the man. He studied its theory from boyhood. He followed Alexander from the Granicus to the Indus, and critically analysed the structure of his campaigns. He had meditated profoundly upon the large principles and strategic laws of war before he was required to put them in practice. The maxims which he evolved in the study were the principles which he afterwards illustrated in the field. And in this, as in everything else—but in this pre-eminently—he went at once, with direct decisive insight, to the root of the matter. To the professional student his disquisitions on strategy must prove invaluable: even to the general reader—the laws which regulate a military campaign being not remotely derived from those which rule the still larger campaign of life—they are full of interest. "A commander should concentrate his own forces, divide his enemies, and never think himself strong enough when he can be stronger. Yet he should remember that additional numbers do not always give strength. Always attack if you cannot avoid an action. If your enemy is strongest, fall on his weakest points, and avoid his strong ones. If you are more powerful, fasten on his vitals, and destroy him. If he is strong, provoke him to separate; if he is weak, drive him into a corner." These maxims were penned many years before he went to the East: his Scindian campaign was their application.

Another fact illustrates this natural aptitude for the military profession. His enthusiastic love for natural beauty is very noticeable; he had a fine eye for the picturesque in a country, and many of his descriptions of scenery are admirable; but after a deep-drawn breath of admiration, he turned instinctively to its military character. The pass is not only grand and striking; it is the place where a handful might resist a host.

The plain is not merely a fertile and richly wooded amphitheatre; it is the field which opposing armies select for battle. It is very interesting in this light to accompany him to Greece, and follow him step by step from one Hellenic battle-field to another. A singular spectacle! The science of the new world testing, by reference to the unchangeable facts of nature, the prudence, the heroism, and the capacity of the old. It is indeed no common treat to be present while one of Wellington's captains estimates, from the modern soldier's point of view, the military capabilities of Marathon and Thermopylæ.

We say that, as a soldier, Napier was a man of genius, and his military acts are *poetic*,—masterly as a thorough soldier's, and yet imaginative. Very good generals there have been, steady, prosaic, commonplace men, who have done their work prudently and effectively; but the great captains, Alexander, Hannibal, Cæsar, Napoleon, Wellington, Napier, were made of different stuff. One or two incidents from the career of the latter will illustrate this brilliant originality.

In 1818 we were at war with America: a war which we conducted by making desultory descents upon the eastern seaboard,—sacking a village here, burning a homestead there. Out of this petty contention, Napier's plan of war rises large and portentous. He asked to be landed on the coast of Carolina with a single regiment of English soldiers. At its head he undertook in six months to raise the whole slave population; and, in the shape of the Southern States, exact a "material guarantee" which might bring the Republic to reason. His information led him to believe that his scheme was feasible, and we hesitate to say that it was not. Considering the condition of society, the imperfect communication, and the great extent of waste land, depopulated, or peopled only by the slave-owner and his hostile dependants, in these States,—this, in any defensive war, is evidently even to-day the weak point of the Republic. The free activities of the North oppose to foreign aggression an impenetrable front; can as much be confidently predicted of the hollow and decayed societies of the South? [1]

The general conception of the first Scindian campaign was masterly. Napier, indeed, underrated the prowess of the Beloo-

[1] This, of course, was written before the American civil war.

chee chivalry; but this was an error that only experience could rectify, and it was an error, besides, which has secured him imperishable fame; for had he been undeceived in time, the splendid spectacle of a handful of English troopers rushing at Meeanee and Dubba upon twenty times their own number of fierce, well-trained, and courageous warriors, would never have been witnessed. But in every other respect the strategy was consummate. The situation was difficult. The time was limited. The hot months were approaching, and before they arrived the campaign must be won. Napier was therefore obliged to bring his quarrel with the Ameers to an immediate issue. But it was in their power to scatter their retainers without coming to an actual engagement; make for the Eastern desert on the one hand, or, crossing the Indus on the other, gain the mountains of Beloochistan; and then reunite and attack his little force when the heat had set in, and it was impossible for Europeans to keep the field. All these possibilities he foiled. He destroyed their desert retreat; he cut them off from the river; and before the ramparts of Hyderabad, their capital, and the only place where—it had struck him from the first—he could with any certainty bring this Arab-like race to bay, he fought the battle of Meeanee.

But the most striking and original incident in the campaign, and the one which most rivets and fascinates the imagination, is the march upon the desert sanctuary of Emaun Ghur. Along the eastern border of Scinde lies a barren desert—Regeestan, or the Land of Sand, the natives call it. According to the notion they entertained before Napier came, the desert presented an impenetrable barrier to European troops, who could not live among its thirsty and barren steppes. Consequently, whenever they wished to evade an engagement or baffle a foe, the Arab race struck their tents and disappeared amid the dust of the wilderness. Emaun Ghur—the stronghold of the northern, as Omercote was of the southern Ameers—lay one hundred miles from the fertile Indus valley, in the heart of this desert; and so long as the princes could retreat with impunity to their lion-like lair, Napier felt that it was impossible to attack them with success. He determined to destroy this security, and with it the *prestige* of the desert; prove to his foes that there was no mountain however rugged, no desert however inhospitable, where the English soldier could

not track them out. He keenly appreciated, indeed, the danger of a military march across the wilderness; amid its waves of loose sand, which a breath of wind could stir into swift and terrible hostility; where there was neither food for his camels nor water for his men. "I am fully aware of the danger of these marches into the desert," he says, "but the thing may be done; what one man does, another may do. I ought to have quiet thoughts," he goes on, "and cannot; for I am throwing myself into a desert, and must not think of John" (his nephew, who had been wounded), "or I may involve all under me in disaster and disgrace. This is a hard trial for an old man of sixty; it shakes me to the foundation. Yet what signifies these troubles? I feel a spring in me that defies all difficulties. The time of life is short, but to spend that shortness vainly 'twere too long. This thought must urge me to resolution, and resolution is half the battle." So, mounting on camels a hundred of his troopers, he cast himself boldly upon the wilderness; and after a three days' march amid waste sand-hills skirted with the scanty desert vegetation, and clothed with loose sea-shells, "mussels, cockles, and the spiral unicorn," *débris* of some primeval flood, he reached the great fortress, which he found evacuated, and which he utterly destroyed. It was a perilous and intrepid exploit; his biographer compares it with Marius's descent on Jugurtha's town of Capsa: to ourselves, in its silence and rapidity it recalls Montrose's winter march across the Grampians to the country of Argyle. In either case the effect was decisive: the sense of confident security was destroyed.

Montrose—Napier's most renowned ancestor—was the last of the courtly Cavaliers. Yet his descendant contrived to preserve in *his* wars a dash of the antique chivalry. The Plutarchian hero, however, and not the fine gentleman of the *beau monde*, was the model after which he had been cast; and his wilful humour, his rugged eccentricity, his impracticable honesty, prevented the society to which he belonged from recognising the essentially chivalrous nobleness of his disposition. In no respect was this more conspicuously manifested than in the estimate it induced him to form of his military opponents. He acknowledged with enthusiasm the imperial genius of Napoleon, and bitterly resented the shame of his captivity. During the Scindian war, he invariably restored their swords to the

beaten chieftains; and he rendered generous justice to the soldierly qualities of the "Lion,"—the noblest and most warlike of his warlike race. He delighted to recognise and reward deeds of genuine valour, by whomsoever performed. "At Dubba, also, as at Meeanee," he exclaims, "a leader, the same at both, and worthy of all praise, animated the fight—Hoche Mohamed Seedee, an Abyssinian slave! Heroic in strength of body and mind, this brave man and his brother slaves, who formed the domestic guard of the Ameers, forced their dastard lords to fight at Meeanee; then, having vainly opposed their final surrender, sought the Lion; and at Dubba, fighting with unbounded fury, fell to the last man under the bayonets of the 22d Regiment." There is in these words the generous glow, the eloquent enthusiasm of the born gentleman, who detects the hero in the slave.

Sir Charles's career was peculiar in many ways—most peculiar perhaps in this, that it began when the majority of those who started along with him were in their graves. He was past sixty before he held any great command. When sent to Scinde he was an old man. "It will be sorrowful," he says on that occasion, "to leave you all, for it is late in life, and I am much worn. I am now past fifty-nine, and for this command should be thirty-nine. Oh for forty, as at Cephalonia, where I laughed at eighteen hours' hard work on foot, under a burning sun! now, at sixty, how far will my carcass carry me?—no great distance; well, to try is glorious." This feeling in his later years often came uppermost—how much he had to do, and how short the time in which to do it. It oppressed him to know that he was sixty—an old man, with a great empire to conquer and consolidate. Remembering the things he did, and the memorable name he secured, after the elastic vigour of manhood was departed,—what would he not have achieved had he been earlier intrusted with the conduct of great affairs?

In this resolute spirit did the old man toil on till his death,—honourably, intelligently, conscientiously. Such an example invests mature life with a finer charm than commonly attaches to it. Disguise it as we may, the grey hairs to which we hasten are too often a crown, not of glory, but of sorrow and scorn. The great lawyer, the great general, and the great poet, sink into dotage and decay. They may bequeath great names and great books; but what do these avail them? To the man

who feels how infinitely more valuable a complete *life* is than even the best and completest of deeds and writings, this phenomenon of mental destruction—the crash of the system—must remain a perplexing problem. Is this the end of all?—"the blackness of thick darkness,"—or, at best, childishness, weakness, oblivion? Very other was the old age of Napier. He fought great battles, governed great provinces, achieved a great name, long after that period had passed when, according to an antique morality not quite exploded, it behoves men to lay aside the things of the present life, and to prepare their "souls" for the next. Sir Charles, who knew of no special preparation for the other world better than doing his work well in this—and that kind of religion he had practised all his life—worked on early and late, in season and out of season, till the day of his death. His eye was not dimmed, nor his natural force abated. But at length the battered body could not keep pace any longer with the keen, undaunted, untiring spirit,—

> "The fiery soul, which, working out its way,
> Fretted the pigmy body to decay,
> And o'er-informed the tenement of clay."

So the campaign has ended, and the veteran, after his hard work, rests well,—*ubi saeva indignatio cor ulterius lacerare nequit.* Yet the epitaph is inappropriate,—it is difficult to imagine a Napier taking his rest even in the grave. For that inquisitive and ardent spirit there must be other, nobler work to do—*elsewhere.* If he sleep, he sleeps lightly,—ready to awake at the first breath of morning,—like Heine's grenadier, with his bare sword at his side:—

> "So will ich liegen und horchen still,
> Wie eine Schildwach' im Grabe,
> Bis einst ich höre Kanonen Gebrüll
> Und wiehernder Rosse Getrabe:
> Dann reitet mein Kaiser wohl über mein Grab,
> Viel Schwerter klirren und blitzen;
> Dann steig' ich gewaffnet hervor aus dem Grab,
> Den Kaiser, den Kaiser zu schützen."

LORD MACAULAY.

BORN, 1800. DIED, 1859.

—o—

IT can hardly be said that Macaulay belonged to the very highest order of minds. I do not think that he did. In no department except the historical did he show pre-eminent capacity, and even his History is open to the charge of being only a splendid and ornate panorama. His was not a creative intellect. It could not have fashioned *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, a *Faust*, or *The Cenci*. He wrote spirited lyrics in which the traditions and associations of a historic people are handled with consummate judgment; but we miss the spontaneous and unsystematic music, the inartificial and childlike grace of the true ballad.[1] The lyrist is the creature of impulse, and Macaulay was never impulsive. Lofty, unimpassioned, self-restrained, he never confesses to any of the frailties of genius. He had great natural powers, no doubt;

[1] There is a very graceful little song written by Lord Macaulay in 1827, and included in his *Miscellaneous Writings* (ii. 417). But comparing it with any of the Laureate's, we detect at a glance the great gulf between true poetry and the most effective and finished copy.

"O stay, Madonna! stay;
'Tis not the dawn of day
That marks the skies with yonder opal streak;
The stars in silence shine;
Then press thy lips to mine,
And rest upon my neck thy fervid cheek."

his memory was prodigious and exact; his understanding just and masculine; still it seems to me that he was in everything indebted more to art than to nature. He is the highest product of a profound and exquisite culture. This of course detracts from the quality of his handiwork. Only the work of authentic genius is imperishable. The work of the artificer, however elaborate, however curiously finished, does not survive. But Macaulay unquestionably *had* genius of a kind: the genius which moulds the results of immense industry into a coherent and consistent whole. This is a fine and a most rare gift; and we are not wrong when we assert that its owner must always be, even when not of the highest order, a man of genius. Associated with the somewhat artificial constitution of his powers, is the want of flexibility which he shows. There is little virtue in the agility of the jester, or the suppleness of the mimic; but Macaulay wanted that natural lightness or *airiness* of touch, which characterises the working of a thoroughly creative mind. He assailed pigmies with eighty-pounders. His heavy metal did its work well; but it struck right and left, the small as well as the great, without comparison or a nice discrimination. He is one of the greatest masters of the English tongue. The march of his ordered prose is measured and stately. Still it is ponderous, compared at least with the unaffected freedom and flexible life of Shakespeare's, or Fielding's, or Charles Lamb's. But the art with which this defect is concealed is, like every other detail of Lord Macaulay's art, perfect in its way. The style is ponderous, but there is no monotony. Short sentences, which, like the fire of sharpshooters through cannon, break the volume of sound, are introduced at stated intervals into each paragraph. A Junius-like epigram follows the imposing burst of eloquence with which Burke or Brougham might have clenched a great

Then take at a venture any stanza of the Laureate's:—

"Ask me no more; thy fate and mine are sealed;
I strove against the stream, and all in vain;
Let the great river take me to the main;
No more, dear love, for at a touch I yield;
Ask me no more."

Yet surely Mr Matthew Arnold's denunciation of Lord Macaulay's muse is somewhat overdone?

harangue. There is no slovenliness in these finished pages. But to make the severe and jealous supervision too obvious would break the spell. So any avowal of the labour that has been expended is studiously avoided. An air of negligence is affected. Colloquial expressions are introduced. The immense industry is covertly disowned.

Lord Macaulay's elaborate polish has proved, we think, exceedingly valuable to our rapid, perplexed, and somewhat incoherent age. Too many of our ablest men are apt to speak and think in heroics. Their likings and dislikings are equally violent, and equally valueless. That there is something fascinating in the passionate theology and philosophy of the age, we all admit. The fanatic in politics and religion makes many converts; toleration is a plant of a slow, laborious, and difficult growth. Lord Macaulay was no fanatic. He was neither a moral nor an intellectual bigot. A rhetorician by temperament, he was saved from the sins of the rhetoricians by his vigorous manliness, his justice of judgment, and his admirable sense. It cannot be said that his speculations on any topic were very profound; but, as far as they went, they were sound, accurate, above all luminous. His logic, if not exhaustive, was exact and incisive. He seldom undertook any argument which he had not mastered. He never, indeed, quite rose to the height of the great argument of Puritanism; but, accepting the limited data with which he started, his conclusions were irresistible. There were spiritual capacities and mental needs in the heroes of the Commonwealth which provoked them into action, and which made them what they were to England. These Macaulay never comprehended; his plummet could not fathom them; they lay beyond the reach of his even temper and unimpassioned intellect. His critical creed was marked by the same narrowness. He considered Samuel Rogers a greater singer than Samuel Coleridge. He relished the polish and culture of the *Italy*, and he respected a writer who was at once a finished gentleman and a fastidious poet. The uncouthness, the slovenliness, the eccentricities, the want of taste and judgment of the Windermere brethren, were sins that he could not tolerate. Nay, perhaps he was altogether incapable of understanding the vague and fitful feelings which they tried to render, and which give a peculiar charm to the muse of Shelley and Tennyson. He insisted that whatever

was said should be said clearly—should be written in words which men could read as they ran.

> "This song was made to be sung at night,
> And he who reads it in broad daylight
> Will never read its mystery right,
> And yet—it is childlike easy."

"Nonsense!" he in effect replied; "if there is anything whatever to be read, it will read much better in the daylight than in the dark." Such a creed, of course, can only be held by one who is destitute of the supremest elements of the poetic faculty—by a critic who has never been pursued by the haunting forms that people the twilight of the imagination. Correctness, finish, and a kind of obvious, if not very weighty truth, were what Macaulay constantly aimed at. Thus he seldom reached entire historical truth, or entire critical truth. It is a thousand pities that he did not write a history of the reign of Queen Anne. Both the poets and the politicians of that age (with one superb and sombre exception) were men whom he could thoroughly gauge. His picture of that brilliant group of versatile, accomplished, witty, corrupt, and splendid gentlemen, would have sparkled like the life which it represented. He would have described with inimitable effect statesmen who were wits and poets, and poets who were wits and statesmen. But his hand faltered when he had to register grander passions and darker conflicts. The spiritual pains, the stormy struggles, which tore England asunder in the seventeenth century, were put aside by him with disrelish. The men who embodied and represented this mental strife in the nation—these diseased aspirations after a Divine kingdom and governor—were treated with coldness and disrespect. The strongest, richest, most unconventional, most complicated characters, become comparatively commonplace when he touches them. The virtue is taken out of them. Even the men he most admires are reduced to the most ordinary types. The historical Whig—steady, sagacious, moderate, never unselfishly imprudent, never honestly intemperate—is his ideal of human nature. A very good one in its way; though one sometimes fancies that the reckless and blundering devotion of these simple country gentlemen and yeomen to the falsest of kings, is more generous, and perhaps even more heroic.

But, as I have said, it is this very absence of enthusiasm, this essential moderation of character, this almost finical polish, which has made Lord Macaulay's influence so valuable. We were all in danger of going to the opposite extreme. Mr Carlyle's passionate and speculative genius (for his genius *is* speculative, however realistic it may appear in certain aspects) seemed at one time likely to sweep all before it. We were going to revolutionise our morals, our politics, and our theology. We were going to transform our heroes into saints, and to paint the devil (when we did not whitewash him from hoof to horns) even blacker than of old. We were going to untie "red tape," and to put "earnest" men into the public offices. "Gigs," "shams," classical English, and other respectable institutions, were to be abolished. The Church of the Future was to embrace Mahomet, Confucius, and Mrs Brownrigg. I know when I write these sentences that I am caricaturing Mr Carlyle's opinions; but I am not caricaturing the feelings which his writings stirred in the minds of many of his disciples. Now, against such feelings—which were indeed the natural product of an age of intense mental excitement, remarkable scientific progress, and strongly developed egotism—an antidote was found in Lord Macaulay. It was an immense advantage to have at the head of our literature a man who thought calmly, who spoke moderately, who wrote fastidiously, whose enthusiasm was never intemperate, whose judgment was never excited. This great potentate in letters opposed to the licence of speculation and the riot of the imagination, a simple theory of morals, a simple system of politics, and a simple code of criticism. He did not recognise many new men and things that were alike good and true; that he did not recognise them may be traced possibly to some mental defect; but this very narrowness of intellectual sympathy enabled him effectively to stem the current. Men who are perplexed by the controversy of subtle motives and complicated passions, seldom think with clearness, or act with decision. And this simplicity of mental insight in Macaulay must not be confounded with intellectual rigidness or the barrenness of theory. It was a simplicity more historical than logical. A Frenchman similarly gifted would have arrived at universal suffrage and electoral districts; but Macaulay, with his historic culture, and his English associations, could not become a political dogmatist. So, instead of

driving him into democracy or absolutism, it made him, on the contrary, regard with hearty admiration the rough adjustments, the intricate compromises, the balanced inconsistencies, which are so unmeaning to the strictly scientific intellect, but on which old and historic societies *must* rest.

Lord Macaulay was thus, alike by inheritance and temperament, a Whig. As such, in the cant of the day, he may be considered a "representative man." Whiggery has had no more characteristic, no more illustrious, interpreter. Had he been endowed with wider aspirations, or broader sympathies, he would not have represented his party so faithfully as he did. Tory and Radical politicians are frequently men of fervid genius. They require to be so. The Conservative, who invests the constitution with a halo of mysterious sanctity, borrows the colours from his imagination; the Radical who sighs for an ideal republic—the Milton who dreams of a perfectly ordered commonweal, whose king is God—exerts the constructive powers of the imagination, no less than religious or philosophical enthusiasm. But the Whig is thoroughly practical. He is satisfied with things as they are: having no blind attachments, however, he does not object to reforms, especially if they effect no change. But he does not expect much from them—as he does not venerate the venerableness of the Constitution, so neither does he hail the approach of the *civitas Dei*. A temperate respect is about the warmest political emotion of which he is capable. Even his prejudices are not immoderate. Lord Macaulay was a great man, but he was a Whig great man. The subtleties of the imagination did not perplex him, nor did the contradictions of the moral life. Wordsworth's description of a creature "moving about in worlds not realised," would have been singularly inapplicable to that compact, serene, and luminous mind. It was not agitated by "the obstinate questionings of sense and outward things" which have troubled the sagest men; nor by those high instincts

> "before which our mortal nature
> Doth tremble like a guilty thing surprised."

None of these dim and perilous tracks of the spirit were trodden by Lord Macaulay.

That Lord Macaulay's just and well-balanced intelligence did good service to us, we have admitted; but that it is sufficient

for the Whig to continue to be what Lord Macaulay was, or that he can contrive to do good service of any kind by a servile imitation of his model, it is difficult to admit. The present condition of the Whigs shows, on the contrary, that a party which appropriates none of the elements of the current life and thought must perish. The Whig in 1860 is intellectually, if not politically, dead. A party whose notions of National Reformation are exhausted by a six-pound franchise, betrays a poverty of thought that cannot be tolerated even in our governors. On Lord Macaulay himself the traditions of his party exercised a questionable influence. In his History, English political life becomes an affair of the Senate rather than of the people. We lose sight of the nation in the constitution. Those slowly matured national convictions which alone work out great national changes, are disregarded, or, at least, are made to play a less important part in the development of society than a wordy debate in the Commons, or a conflict between the two Houses on a question of privilege.

It has been said that Lord Macaulay wanted "heart." A certain coldness of manner and temperament undoubtedly characterised him. He had the reserve of the English gentleman—which, be it remembered, represents the self-respect and restraint, as well as the shyness of the islander. Of his private life (though those best qualified to judge have spoken very warmly of unaffected kindness and wide charities[1]) I cannot speak; and of his writings it is enough to say that, whenever right or truth is menaced, his vindication glows with manly fervour, and that his love for liberty is expressed in passages as full of fire as the poet's,—

> "O ye loud waves! and O ye forests high!
> And O ye clouds that far above me soar'd!
> Thou rising sun! thou blue rejoicing sky!
> Yea, everything that is and will be free!
> Bear witness for me wheresoe'er ye be
> With what deep worship I have still ador'd
> The spirit of divinest liberty."

The truth appears to be that Macaulay had keen feelings united with a tranquil loftiness of disposition. Fashioned in a heroic

[1] This was written, of course, before the publication of Mr Trevelyan's very interesting and brilliant life of his uncle.

mould, he seldom broke down or seemed to break down. It is well that we should fail sometimes; failure teaches us humility, and our own weakness. But Macaulay never failed—his life from its beginning to its close was a rapid success. Thus there is an air of impassiveness about him which men of harder lives and more vehement passions cannot long sustain. He is not arrogant exactly, but he shows no sense of frailty. The repose which marks him is not the repose which has been earned by desperate and hard-won victory; it is the natural repose of those simple antique beings who dwelt amid the Etrurian woods, "while Italy was yet guiltless of Rome." They have not sinned, and they have not conquered sin; nor is the unruffled brow "entrenched" by the "deep scars of thunder," which mental anguish and conflict leave behind them. That calm and stoical soul had, indeed, little in common with men who, in the words of George Eliot, surrender themselves without restraint to the seductive guidance of illimitable needs.

JOHN WILSON.

BORN, 1785. DIED, 1854.

JOHN WILSON had the eagle beak, the lion-like mane, of the Napiers. Mrs Barrett Browning has said of Homer—

> "Homer, with the broad suspense
> Of thund'rous brows, and lips intense
> Of garrulous God-innocence,"—

and whenever I read the lines, the mighty presence of Christopher North rises before me. John Wilson was an immense man, physically and mentally, and yet his nature was essentially incomplete. He needed concentration. Had the tree been thoroughly pruned, the fruit would have been larger and richer. As it was, he seldom contrived to sustain the inspiration unimpaired for any time; it ran away into shallows, and spread aimlessly over the sand. In many respects one of the truest, soundest, honestest men who ever lived, he used to grow merely declamatory at times. Amazingly humorous as the Shepherd of the *Noctes* is (there are scenes such as the opening of the haggis, and the swimming match with Tickler, while the London packet comes up the Forth, which manifest the humour of conception as well as the humour of character, in a measure that has seldom been surpassed by the greatest masters), his fun is often awkward, and his enthusiasm is apt to tire. Yet, had Shakspeare written about Falstaff once a month for twenty years, would we not possibly have said the same even of him? And if the Shepherd at his best could be taken out of the

Noctes, and compressed into a compact duodecimo volume, we should have an original piece of imaginative humour which might fitly stand for all time by the side of the portly Knight.[1] But the world is too crowded and too busy to preserve a creation which is not uniformly at its best, which, on the contrary, is diluted and watered through forty volumes of a magazine; and so it is possible that, not quite unwillingly, posterity will let the Shepherd die. The same in a way holds true of Christopher's own fame. The moralist has told us from of old that only the mortal part of genius returns to the dust. But then this mortal part was so large a part of Wilson. He was such a magnificent man! No literary man of our time has had such muscles and sinews, such an ample chest, such perfect lungs, such a stalwart frame, such an expansive and Jove-like brow. Had he lived in the classic ages they would have made a god of him,—not because he wrote good verses, or possessed the divine gift of eloquence, but because his presence was god-like. There was a ruddy glow of health about him too,—such as the people of no nation have possessed as a nation, since the culture of the body, as an art of the national life, has been neglected. The critic, therefore, who never saw Wilson, cannot rightly estimate the sources of his influence. We, on the contrary, who looked upon him, who heard him speak, know that we can never listen to his like again; can never again look upon one who, while so intellectually noble, so eloquent, so flushed with poetic life, did so nearly approach, in strength and comeliness, the type of bodily perfection. The picture of that old man eloquent in his college class-room—the old man who had breasted the flooded Awe, and cast his fly across the bleakest tarns of Lochaber—pacing restlessly to and fro like a lion in his confined cage, his grand face working with emotion while he turns to the window, through which are obscurely visible the spires and smoky gables of the ancient city, his dilated nostril yet "full of youth," his small grey eye alight with visionary fire, as he discourses (somewhat discursively, it must be owned), of truth, and beauty, and goodness—is one not to be forgotten. Had he talked the merest twaddle, the effect would have been quite the same; he was a living poem where the austere grandeur of the old drama

[1] Such concise volume I have tried my hand on in *The Comedy of the Noctes Ambrosianæ*.

was united with the humour and tenderness of modern story-tellers; and some such feeling it was that attracted and riveted his hearers.

It has been said by unfriendly critics that Wilson was an egotist. Montaigne and Charles Lamb were egotists; but we do not complain of an egotism to which not the least charm of their writings is to be attributed. The truth is, that the charge against Wilson rests on a misconception. Christopher North was egotistical; but Christopher North was a creation of the imagination. He represented to the world the invincible Tory champion, before whose crutch the whole breed of Radicals, and Whiglings, and Cockneys fled, as mists before the sun. It was impossible to endow this gouty Apollo with the frailties of mortal combatants. Haughty scorn, immaculate wisdom, unassailable virtue, were the characteristics of the potent tyrant. We have as little right to say that Wilson was an egotist because Christopher North was egotistical (though, no doubt, he could have *looked* the part admirably), as to say that Milton was a fallen angel because he drew the devil. Men (whiggish and priggish) may continue to resent, indeed, as indelicate and unbecoming, the licence of his fancy, and the airy extravagance of his rhetoric; but a juster and more catholic criticism confesses that, in the wide realms of literature, there is room for the grotesque gambols of Puck, for Ariel's moonlight flittings, for the imaginative riot of Wilson and Heine and Jean Paul.

JAMES FREDERICK FERRIER.

BORN, 1808. DIED, 1864.

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FERRIER was a philosophical Quixote,—a man who loved "divine philosophy" for its own sake. The student of pure metaphysics is now rarely met with,—the age of mechanical invention—of the steam-engine and the telegraph—being disposed to regard the proverbially barren fields of psychology with disrelish and disrespect. Against this materialising tendency, Professor Ferrier's life was an uninterrupted and essentially noble protest. No truer, simpler, or more unselfish student ever lived. Seated in his pleasant rustic library, amid its stores of curious and antiquated erudition, he differed as much from the ordinary men one meets in the law courts or on 'Change, as the quaint academic city where he resided differs from Salford or Birmingham. It was here — in his library — that Ferrier spent the best of his days; here that he commented on the Greek psychologists, or explored the intricacies of the Hegelian logic; and for Hegel (be it said in passing) he entertained an intense, and, considering the character of his own mind—its clearness, directness, and love of terseness and epigram—somewhat inexplicable admiration. At the same time he was no mere bookworm. He did not succeed, and did not try to succeed, at the Scottish Bar, to which he was called; but he had many of the qualities—subtlety of thought, lucidity of expression, power of arrangement—which ought to have secured success. He took a keen interest in the letters and politics of

the day. His own style was brilliant and trenchant, and it was probably the slovenliness and inelegance of Reid (which even the studied art and succinct power of Hamilton have been unable to conceal or repair), which drove him into the camp of the enemy. He was considered, in orthodox philosophical circles, somewhat of a Free Lance. He had a sharp scorn for laborious dulness and consecrated feebleness,—a scorn which he took no pains to disguise. When he descended into the controversial arena, this Quixote of the schools was sure to be in the thickest of the *mêlée*. He hit right and left, quietly, deftly, for the most part, it is true, yet with a force and precision which it was unpleasant to provoke, and difficult to resist. If his life should be written hereafter, let his biographer take for its motto the five words from the *Faery Queen*, which the biographer of the Napiers has so happily chosen,—"*Fierce warres and faithful loves.*" For, though combative over his books and his theories, his nature was singularly pure, affectionate, and tolerant. He loved his friends even better than he hated his foes. His prejudices were invincible; but apart from his prejudices, his mind was open and receptive, —prepared to welcome truth from whatever quarter it came. Ferrier, other than a high Tory, is an impossible conception to his friends; yet had he been the most pronounced of Radicals, he could not have returned more constantly to first principles, nor showed more speculative fearlessness. He was, in fact, an intrepid and daring reasoner, who allowed few formulas, political, ecclesiastical, or ethical, to cramp his mind, or restrain the free play of his intellectual faculties. This contrast, no doubt, presents an air of paradox: but Ferrier's character, as well as his logic, was sometimes paradoxical. He was a man of infinite subtlety, and he liked to play with his fancies—to place them under strong lights, and in unusual attitudes; but he possessed a fund of humour and common-sense which made him on the whole a sound and discerning student of human nature. He was content to spend his days in contemplative retirement; but every one who has seen him must have remarked a certain eager look—an eagerness of gesture and of speech—which indicated quite other than a sluggish repose. He united with a peculiar sensitiveness of constitution and fineness of critical faculty, a sturdy and indomitable soul. His slight frame was like a girl's; but he was one of the manliest of men. No man

was more thoroughly independent; no man resented more warmly, or resisted more courageously, the dictation of cliques and the tyranny of sects. Like all these finely fibred, sensitive, fastidious men, he was capable of becoming on occasion, as I have indicated, hotly, and it may be unreasonably, indignant. Perhaps to this original fire and fineness of nature, his early decline is to be attributed. The fiery soul "fretted the pigmy body to decay." Taken from us in the prime of life and in the vigour of his powers, the death of such a man is a loss to our philosophical schools not quickly to be repaired; to his relatives, to his disciples, to his students—to all who knew him in the easy intercourse of social life—the loss is irreparable. Apart altogether from those qualities of heart and intellect, of which the world knows, or may yet know, his friends will not soon forget his refined simplicity of manner,—a manner perfectly unaffected, peculiar to himself, and indicating a remarkable delicacy of organisation, yet smacking somehow of the high breeding and chivalrous courtesy of that old-fashioned school of Scottish gentlemen whom he had known in his youth, and of which he remained the representative.

Mourning over the death of so simple and so true a student —so kind, so chivalrous, and so brave a man—one turns instinctively to that fine, if rugged and uncouth, poem in which Robert Browning has celebrated 'A Grammarian's Funeral.'

"Thither our path lies—Wind we up the heights—
Wait ye the warning?
Our low life was the level's and the night's;
He's for the morning!
Step to a tune, square chests, erect the head,
'Ware the beholders!
This is our master, famous, calm, and dead,
Borne on our shoulders.
Here's the top-peak! the multitude below
Live, for they can there.
This man decided not to Live but Know—
Bury this man there?
Here—here's his place, where meteors shoot, clouds form,
Lightnings are loosened,
Stars come and go! let joy break with the storm—
Peace let the dew send!
Lofty designs must close in like effects;
Loftily lying,
Leave him—still loftier than the world suspects,
Living and dying."

W. M. THACKERAY.

BORN, 1811. DIED, 1863.

—o—

TO-DAY—this Christmas-day—a shadow has fallen upon our happiness. We are sad because a great man has been taken from us suddenly—because "that good white head, which all men knew," has been laid low. When our old postman, Sandy, brought me my letters this forenoon he said to me, "Ye'll have heard, sir, that Mr Thackeray is awa'." Sandy is a bit of a scholar; he is, moreover, a High Churchman and a High Tory; not unfamiliar with the literature in which the distinction between the king *de jure* and the king *de facto* is drawn with such quaint precision; not unfamiliar with the controversies about transubstantiation, consubstantiation, and the like. Yet even Sandy, sublimely elevated above popular excitement, as a postman and antiquary should be, was affected when he told us that the great man was gone.

Some of us had known him well, and had loved—as who could help loving?—that noble simple gentleman. I recalled the last time I had seen him, a year or two previously, when I found him sitting in his den at the top of his house in Onslow Square. Even then he had suffered much and long, and the traces of suffering were visible in his face. I think that even in his brightest moods it was possible to detect these traces, sometimes in the eyes, more frequently about the grave curves of the mouth. Of course I was ushered into his den—of course

he told me how much, and from what, he was suffering. This perfect unreserve, this almost childish openness of nature, was characteristic of Thackeray. He was willing that his whole life should be laid bare, and looked through. He seemed to say, "There is my life—if there are any blemishes in it, make the most of them." The clear transparent simplicity of the boy at the Charterhouse never deserted him. In fact, he often reminded me of a boy. On this very day of which I am speaking he wore an old shooting-coat much too short for him: it sat upon the giant as a boy's jacket would fit an ordinary mortal. And then the contrast would strike one. This mighty, vehement, white-headed boy had written the simplest, purest, most idiomatic English; he had sketched, with a touch incomparably delicate and finished, the intricate mental relations of a meditative but feverish age, of an active yet pensive society; he was a master of that implied and constructive irony which is the last refinement of banter, that irony which is a feature of our modern literature, of which, to repeat what I have said elsewhere, we see no sign in the emphatic satire of Dryden, only an occasional trace in the polemical poetry of Pope and the polemical prose of Bolingbroke, but which bursts into perfect flower in the serious books of Mr Thackeray and the satirical speeches of Mr Disraeli. That this should have been a pure, healthy, honest, boyishly noble and chivalrous soul —that this high-hearted gentleman should have been tender, gentle, upright, true in thought and deed, did not surprise one; nor yet that he should have had such moods of wild fun and airy riot as are embodied in his lesser works—such moods as Heine describes in one inimitable sentence, when he says, "At noon I feel as though I could devour all the elephants of Hindostan, and then pick my teeth with the spire of Strasburg cathedral." But it did surprise one at first to learn that this was the most finished literary artist of his age,—a wise, sad moralist, an extraordinarily subtle humorist, a writer whose stealthy charm and subtle perfection of style and thought almost baffle analysis. This did surprise one, until by some quaint expression, some passing phrase, unconsciously betraying the natural facility, the admirable critical insight of the speaker, the veil was withdrawn, and it became evident that the author of *Vanity Fair* and the man beside you were truly one and the same. Yet, with all his boyishness of manner, there was

something leonine about Thackeray. "And there came up a lion out of Judah!" Miss Brontë exclaimed, when she first saw Lawrence's picture of the giant. With such a presence, he might easily have been tempted to assume an air of false dignity; but he was too wise to do so; for that bright and frank guilelessness could not fail to be the most consummate charm of a man who, intellectually, possessed the subtlety of the serpent. This openness, indeed, was sometimes inconvenient. He felt blame sensitively, and could not always conceal his sensitiveness. On the other hand, a few sentences of sympathetic appreciation, a few "kind words," even when spoken by an unknown critic, were sure to bring cordial thanks from the great man, whose humility was as unfeigned as his greatness.

And he is gone! and the reign of Queen Anne will not be written by Thackeray! Here—in a letter to myself—is perhaps his latest allusion to the "ambition" which he so ardently cherished:—

"Queen Anne has long been my ambition; but she will take many a long year's labour, and I can't ask any other writer to delay on my account. At the beginning of this year I had prepared an announcement, stating that I was engaged on that history; but kept it back, as it was necessary that I should pursue my old trade of novelist for some time yet to come. Meanwhile her image stands before St Paul's, for all the world to look at; and who knows but some one else may be beforehand with both of us, and sketch her off while we are only laying the palette?"

CHARLOTTE BRONTË.

BORN, 1816. DIED, 1855.

THREE-and-thirty years ago — it is only forty-one this twenty-first day of April, A.D. 1857, since Charlotte Brontë was born—a party of children are gathered round the kitchen-fire in the old-fashioned parsonage of Haworth. There are four of them, Charlotte, Emily, Anne, Bramwell,—a brother and three sisters. Two older ones were among the rest last autumn, but they lie with their mother now in the churchyard outside. How the eldest died may be gathered from a few branding pages in *Jane Eyre*. The child was killed by cruel neglect; and though the little martyr never bore malice to any living creature in her life, her death has been bitterly avenged.

The village of Haworth lies high among the Yorkshire uplands, and the parsonage looks down upon the village. There are no trees; little vegetation of any kind; a few stunted bushes and shrubs in front of the house; behind, right up to the kitchen-door, a wide expanse of bleak and melancholy moor. For weeks together, in winter, the inmates are blockaded by the snow which the north wind brings down from the hills. But the old church is not a stone's-cast across the tombstones, so that service on Sundays is seldom missed by the little dwellers in the parsonage. The members of the congregation are imprisoned in narrow castellated pews, on which the names of the proprietors are painted in white letters, as

they are painted on coffins. There is now, 1857, a square tablet inserted in the wall, "To the memory of Charlotte Brontë."

The Rev. Patrick Brontë, who has come all the way from Ireland to plant himself finally in this hopeful district, is the incumbent—a strict, honourable, conscientious man. There is still a dash of the wild Irishman in him, notwithstanding his Cambridge education and sacred calling: so that when angry or annoyed, "he works off his volcanic wrath by firing pistols in rapid succession out of the back-door," which opens luckily upon the moors, across which no one travels except the itinerant packmen who come from the unknown country on the other side of the hills. His parishioners are a rough, lawless, and kindly set, with the shrewd sagacity and blunt address of men born and bred in the West Riding.

The children, with the ruddy firelight lighting up their faces, form a curious group. None of them are very good-looking, except the brother. Of the sisters, "Emily is the prettiest." Charlotte is plain, and very diminutive; to compensate for these disadvantages, her hair is soft, thick, and brown, and her eyes emit a wonderful light—vivid and radiant. "I never saw the like," Mrs Gaskell says, "in any other human creature." She is very short-sighted, however, though her friends accuse her of being able to see, like a cat, in the dark; and she constructs hieroglyphics so minute that they cannot be read now without a microscope. They must write so in Lilliput, if they write at all there.

The father is occupied with the duties of his parish, and as there is no society in the neighbourhood, the children are left very much to themselves and "Tabby," the old Yorkshire serving-woman. They are grave, quiet, considerate. They never play riotously, as children do play, and ought to play. The elder sedulously watch the young ones, and nurse them in a grave, motherly way, which reminds us of certain charming sketches in Leech's portfolio. But from the youngest up to Charlotte, they are all sedate and precocious. They write plays and act them. They publish a magazine for themselves every month; and they give, as *Blackwood* used to do in those days, "a double number for December." Charlotte's favourite hero is the Duke of Wellington. He and his sons, the Marquis of Douro and Lord Charles Wellesley, appear in a hundred

romances which she wrote in those invisible microscopic characters before she was fourteen. The little creatures are fierce politicians—Tories to the backbone, every one of them. They read the *John Bull* and *Blackwood's Magazine*. "The editor," says Charlotte, solemnly, in a paper written at the time, "is Mr Christopher North, an old man, seventy-four years of age; the first of April is his birthday: his company are Timothy Tickler, Morgan O'Doherty, Macrabin Mordecai, and James Hogg, a man of most extraordinary genius, a Scottish shepherd." One of their plays is entitled *The Islanders*. In it each of the children takes possession of a favourite island, and selects "chief men" to carry on the government. "Bramwell," is Charlotte's contemporary account, "chose John Bull, Astley Cooper, and Leigh Hunt; Emily, Walter Scott, Mr Lockhart, Johnny Lockhart; Anne, Michael Sadler, Lord Bentinck, and Sir Henry Halford. I chose the Duke of Wellington and two sons, Christopher North and Co., and Mr Abernethy." Little sister Annie, who is seven, and has to be lifted upon her chair, chooses Sir Henry Halford and Mr Sadler!

A strange childhood!—out of which, through various schools and other harsh experiences, the Brontës grew up to man and woman's estate, and which explains a good deal in their subsequent history. They are the offspring of the moors; and after the sea—whose authority is supreme—the moorland has perhaps the strongest influence in forming and determining the character. All their lives the Brontës love these moors intensely. They look down from their bleak "hills of Judea," and wonder how the dwellers contrive to exist in the "Philistine flats" beneath. The turbid waters of their "beck" are more sacred than the Jordan's. In dreams, at Brussels, they hear the Haworth harebells rustle in the wind. Emily cannot live away from them. She pines and sickens, and would die if she were not brought back and restored to their wild companionship. Everything they say or write is consecrated by this bleak communion. Their honey has the taste of the heath. The scent of the heather is as clearly traceable in their works—especially in the wild and plaintive music of Emily's songs—as the salt of the sea in the palaces of the lagoons.

After passing through much uncongenial drudgery as teachers, both at home and on the Continent, the sisters, in 1844, find themselves once more united in the quiet home among the hills.

Throughout the intervening period, Charlotte has been silently amassing materials for future work. Nothing comes amiss to that observant and inventive brain. She notices every one with whom she is brought into contact—dissects and analyses. The result is, that when she begins to write, her life is transcribed into her novels. The one is a photograph of the other. The scenes reviewers condemn as exaggerated, the characters they pronounce unnatural, are taken from personal experience. When you read her life, you read *Jane Eyre*, *Shirley*, *Villette*, in fragments. The separate parts have simply to be taken out, arranged, riveted together, and you have the romance. But what in the life is fragmentary and incomplete—for we live bit by bit, and never contrive to act out our play uninterruptedly at one sitting—is by the artist's insight cast into dramatic sequence. In one of her letters, Miss Brontë describes the way in which she moulds her experience into fiction: "You are not to suppose that any of the characters are literal portraits. It would not suit the rules of art, nor of my own feelings, to write in that style. We only suffer reality to *suggest*, never to *dictate*. The heroines are abstractions, and the heroes too. Qualities I have seen, loved, and admired, are here and there put in as decorative gems, to be preserved in that setting." But no explanation can ever prove quite exhaustive. The experience can never entirely explain the work. For between lies the mystery of Genius.

What Charlotte is when she returns from the Brussels *pension*, she remains till her death. Very small of stature—when ordering any piece of dress she has to give special instructions, "the full woman's size not suiting me;" very quiet, shy, and diffident; very resolute when a duty has to be performed; very timid when happiness has to be encountered, or success enjoyed. Her physical constitution is miserably weak and sensitive, but her will is perfect. She is never exacting, never sanguine, never disappointed when people fail her. From her earliest years she has schooled herself not to expect or demand much—scarcely, indeed, to *hope* at all. Yet the spell of the imagination is very potent upon her: sometimes she invites it, sometimes she dreads it; but it may not be disobeyed, even when it torments her. One might expect such a woman to hold extreme, exaggerated, unhealthy views; on the contrary, she is always moderate. Vagueness, inaccuracy,

slovenliness whether in mind or person, she cannot tolerate. Sentiment and sentimental insincerity are repugnant to the simple directness of her character. She was naturally and by education superstitious, and her mental conflicts would have driven many a man into the cloister. But it is not so with her. She is deeply religious, but never fanatical. She has the old Puritans' perfect confidence in God's government; to her, as to them, the trials of life are divinely appointed, and "at the end of all exists the Great Hope;" but there is no narrowness in her creed. The character altogether is very complex,—cool yet vivid, affluent yet ascetic, vehement yet sedate.

In 1844 the sisters, as we have said, are again united, and recommence the interrupted occupations. The stock of the rustic stationer is exhausted by the reams of paper the girls consume; letters to famous men—Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey, publishers in London, editors in Edinburgh—pass incessantly through the village post-office; and an occasional epistle returns for "Mr Currer Bell," though "no such gentleman," Mr Brontë assures the carrier, "lives in the parish." The first fruit of this suppressed agitation is the advent from the metropolis of a diminutive volume, *Poems by Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell.*

That modest little volume has an old charm for us, in its rude typography, plain binding, peculiar punctuation, and the date, 1846, on the title-page—just the year Sir Robert repealed the Corn Laws. For it was when the country was in the last throes of that great conflict, when Peel was winning victory for the people and defeat for himself, and the barbed shafts of Disraeli quivered every field-night under the Minister's spotless shirt-front, that the poems of the three sisters were given to the world, and permitted to pass unnoticed,—as was indeed to be looked for. Yet the book is one that might have riveted attention even then, and must not now be forgotten.

For the poems are perfectly genuine—veritable utterances of the women who wrote them. There is no poetic exaggeration, no false sentiment, nor study of theatrical effect. They do not wanton with the flowers of rhetoric. I do not believe that more than half-a-dozen metaphors occur throughout the volume. A Puritan could not be more conscientious in his intercourse with his stiff-necked brethren than these girls are in their poetic talk. The imagination is taken to task. The estimate of life

is strictly subdued. They have worked out an experience for themselves, and with God's help they will stick to it. Their gravity of thought and chasteness of language contrast strikingly with the florid and exuberant ornamentation of our younger poets—the poets of the *Renaissance.*

And because of this entire genuineness they never imitate. There is no foreign music in their melody. One does not detect the influence of any other writer. Young poets are habitual plagiarists: but with this volume neither Byron, nor Scott, nor Tennyson, nor Browning has anything to do. The writers speak out plainly and calmly what they have felt themselves, and their thoughts assume without effort the poetic form to which they are most adapted.

They speak calmly; yet we feel sometimes that this composure is enforced. There are deeps of passion underneath the passionless face. The estimate of life is studiously grave and sombre: but at times an intoxicating sense of liberty thrills their blood. There is the martyr's spirit, but there is the hero's too. They *will* not love nor hate over-much: but the throbbing of the wounded heart cannot be always restrained, and at times they are intensely bitter:—

> "They named him mad and laid his bones
> Where holier ashes lie,
> But doubt not that his spirit groans
> In hell's eternity."

There are indications in Currer's contributions of that amazing intellectual force which a year afterwards was to move painfully every English heart: but as yet she has not learnt her strength. Her steps are restrained and embarrassed. She does not move freely. She touches life with the tips of her fingers, so to speak: her whole heart and soul have not yet been cast into her work. Yet in some of them much sympathy with natural beauty is manifested. The wealth of affection which was so jealously watched in her intercourse with men and women was permitted in the lonely presence of the hills to lavish itself unchecked.

Most of the subjects are strangely chosen for girls, and are such as a very marked and decided idiosyncrasy alone would have selected. In Acton's, indeed, there is more of the ordinary woman, mild, patient, devout, loving; and her poetry has little

to distinguish it from the poetry of many women who acquire "the faculty of verse." But those of the other two are very different. In them there is none of the ordinary romance of girlhood. Their heroes are not the heroes of the ball-room, but of the Covenant and the stake,—the warrior-priest who can die for his faith; the patriot who, if it be for his country's gain, will steadfastly allow his honour to be soiled, and

> "wait securely
> For the atoning hour to come;"

the worker who in his loneliness achieves the redemption of his people; the martyr with the thorny crown upon his brow, but with the peace of God and the hope of immortality in his heart. Success, the usual gauge applied by youth, is not with them the test of worth.

> "The long war closing in defeat,
> Defeat serenely borne,"

is in their eyes the noblest fate that can be reserved for any man. So they do not pray for happiness, but for inward control, and the patience which endures to the end.

> "Of God alone, and self-reliance,
> I ask for solace,—hope for aid."

Praise, fame, friendship, the good word of the world, they do not covet; they can live without them; nay, resign them cheerfully if need be.

> "There's such a thing as dwelling
> On the thought ourselves have nursed,
> And with scorn and courage telling
> The world to do its worst."

And these are the feelings expressed, not by strong men, but by two delicate woman in their girlhood! The stern spirit of their northern hills, and of the bleak Yorkshire moorland, haunted their birthplace, and must have entered early into their souls.

Shortly after the arrival of the book of Poems at Haworth, *Wuthering Heights*, by *Ellis Bell*, or Emily Brontë, is sent to the printer.

Emily Brontë—the finer, I am afraid I must say the ideal, side of whose character is sketched in *Shirley*—is, I think, the most powerful of the Brontë family. They are a remarkable race,

all of them. Bramwell, even, whose life was wrecked at the outset, meets death Mirabeau-like. He holds an old theory, that the Will can be supreme to the end; and so when he feels the last agony approaching, he desires to be raised to his feet, and dies standing. But Emily is a Titan. Charlotte loved her with her whole heart; to her the implacable sister is "mine bonnie love;" but Emily never responds. She is stern, taciturn, untamable. Her logic is rigorous; but when she once forms an opinion, however extreme it may be, no logic can move her. She clings to it with stubborn tenacity. Her affections, such as they are, are spent on her moorland home, and the wild animals she cherishes. The tawny bull-dog "Keeper" is her special friend. But even "Keeper" must be taught to obey that iron will, and he is taught in a way that he never forgets. On her deathbed she accepts no assistance—does not admit that she suffers even. Her death, Charlotte said afterwards, "was very terrible. She was torn, conscious, panting, reluctant, yet resolute, out of a happy life."

Wuthering Heights is not unworthy of its grim parentage. Emily's novel is not, perhaps,—more powerful than her sister's; but we meet in it, I think, with more subtle diversities of character than we do in any of them. Charlotte Brontë's heroes are all emphatic and masterful,—marked types, not delicate suggestions. They are strong, passionate, generous, vindictive, as the case may be; but no attempt is made to explain conflicting motives, to assimilate complex passions. There is a certain immobility and hardness in the outline. They want the delicate tendernesses of the imagination, the gleams of barbaric poetry which lie deep buried under the swart brow of the Moor, or flash from the blue eyes of the Northman. Masculine, independent, impatient of the prose of life, they are, yet they are not poetic. There is nothing of the gipsy nature in them. They remain broad-featured, broad-shouldered Anglo-Saxons, even in their moments of dreariest independence. In Emily's we are conscious of something more. A volcano is beneath the flowers where we stand, and we cannot tell where it may burst. There is a refrain of fierce poetry in the men and women she draws—gleams of the gipsy savageness and of the gipsy tenderness. A strange fire, inherited from an Eastern kindred, lighted among Norland moors, burns in their eyes. They flutter on the confines between our love and our hate. Their caprice, their sul-

lenness, their mercilessness, hurt and revolt us; but we cannot abandon them to perdition without a prayer that they may be saved. Heathcliff, the boy, is ferocious, vindictive, wolfish; but we understand the chain of fire that binds Cathy to him. There stands the brawny young Titan, with his blackened visage and unwashed hands and unkempt hair, as though he had come in hot haste from some infernal forge, sullen, resentful, no Christian virtue implanted in his heathenish soul, no English grace softening his obdurate visage; and yet, as he stands moodily in the presence of his fastidious, courtly, and well-bred rival, we feel that though his soul is the fouler, he is the greater, the more lovable of the two. He may be an imp of darkness at bottom—as is indeed most probable, considering his parentage—but he has come direct from the affluent heart of nature, and the hardy charm of her bleak hillsides and savage moorlands rests upon the boy. On the boy only, however; for the man develops and degenerates; it is then a tiger-cat's passion, a ghoul's vindictiveness, a devil's remorse.

The elder Cathy, too, is very subtly conceived in her fire, and tenderness, and vanity, and perversity, and the untutored grace of her free moorland nature. The hardy half-savage child, with her mocking spirit, and bleeding feet, and swart companion-imp, "as dark almost as if it came from the devil," scampering across the hills in gipsy-fashion, and scaring the meek maidens of the village with her elfish laughter; the wilful little vagrant who, in her dream of Heaven, breaks her heart with weeping to come back to earth, and wakens sobbing for joy because "the angry angels have cast her out into the middle of the heath on the top of Wuthering Heights;" the perverse, fervent, untamed coquette, alternating between love and pride, hell and heaven, our admiration and our dread—unplumbed depths of passion convulsing her soul, but with nothing mean or meagre in the whole of her burning heart,—excites a wonderful interest, retains it to the last, and gives to the *Catherine Linton* scrawled upon the nursery panel an eerie and fitful pathos. Her childish delight in arranging on her deathbed the lapwing, the mallard, and the moor-fowl's feathers—the wild birds she had followed with Heathcliff in their childish rambles across the moorland,—is sad and true as the "coronet flowers" of Ophelia. In that idle forgetfulness and tender confusion there is a genuine reminiscence of the Shakspearian mad-

ness. This richness and affluence of poetic life in which Emily invests the creations of her brain, these delicacies and subtleties of insight, are all the more striking, from the grave, sombre, and resolutely homely form in which her tale is narrated. She may describe abnormal characters; but, whatever they are, she describes them with startling genuineness.

This was the only romance Emily ever wrote; a year after its publication she died. These very grand and impressive lines were her last:—

"No coward soul is mine,
No trembler in the world's storm-troubled sphere;
I see Heaven's glories shine,
And faith shines equal, arming me from fear.

O God, within my breast,
Almighty, ever-present Deity!
Life—that in me has rest
As I—undying Life—have power in Thee!

Vain are the thousand creeds
That move men's hearts; unutterably vain;
Worthless as withered weeds,
Or idlest froth amid the boundless main,

To waken doubt in one
Holding so fast by Thine infinity;
So surely anchored on
The steadfast rock of immortality.

With all-embracing love
Thy spirit animates eternal years,
Pervades and broods above;
Changes, sustains, dissolves, creates, and rears.

Though earth and man were gone,
And suns and universes ceased to be,
And Thou were left alone,
Every existence would exist in Thee.

There is not room for death,
Nor atom that his might could render void;
Thou—THOU art being and Breath,
And what THOU art may never be destroyed."

While *Wuthering Heights* was being slowly printed, Charlotte, after many disappointments, had at length found a publisher for *Jane Eyre*, and the former was still in the press when the latter appeared. The book spread like wildfire. The amazing power it evinced, and the sustained and intense interest, from the

dreary and bitter childhood—one of the most miserable pictures in fiction—to the close, were at once recognised. The curiosity of the public, moreover, was piqued as to who the unknown author might be, and many famous names were suggested. For no one dreamt that this strong Pythoness, or prophetess, with her sharp, ringing, oracular warnings—"conventionality is not morality; self-righteousness is not religion; to pluck the mask from the face of the Pharisee is not to lift an impious hand to the Crown of Thorns,"—could be the homely child of a rustic parsonage, the unpretending little girl called Charlotte Brontë by her friends.

Emily and Anne Brontë died soon after the publication of *Jane Eyre;* but they lived long enough to know that their sister had become famous. To that sister, however, fame was but a sorry exchange for affection; and with the exception of her aged father, Charlotte was now left utterly alone. When we read the letters she wrote at this time we cannot help wondering how she contrived to live through these dreary winters. "Sometimes when I wake in the morning," she writes, "and know that Solitude, Remembrance, and Longing are to be almost my companions all day through; that at night I shall go to bed with them; that they will long keep me sleepless; that next morning I shall wake to them again,—sometimes, Nell, I have a heavy heart of it. I miss familiar voices commenting mirthfully and pleasantly; the room seems very still, very empty. Happiness quite unshared can scarcely be called happiness; it has no taste." Mrs Gaskell has chosen a few lines from *Aurora Leigh* for the motto to her book:—

> "O my God,
> ——Thou hast knowledge, only Thou!
> How dreary 'tis for women to sit still
> On winter nights by solitary fires,
> And hear the nations praising them far off!"

So Charlotte Brontë felt at that desolate hearthstone among the hills.

But her father still lives, and she lives for him. It is long before the old gentleman can realise that this woman of whom all England is talking, is his daughter Charlotte; but when at length convinced, and when Yorkshire people begin to honour, in their rough way, the little woman who had drawn their hard features so faithfully, and to make pilgrimages to the rude

parsonage as to a shrine, he becomes gladly and proudly interested in his child's fame. And Charlotte is the most faithful and docile of children; is bound up in the old man's happiness, obeys his slightest wish,—nay, will not allow "Paul Emmanuel" to die, because her father asks her to spare him; and so—though with her mind's eye she had seen her hero perish in that wild storm on the Atlantic, and *knows* that he is dead—leaves his fate unexplained and enigmatical. As the years went by, life brightened upon her. She paid an occasional visit to the metropolis, where she beheld the great soldier of her childish romance; and Thackeray, whom, of all men, after "the Duke," she honoured most; and Rachel, whose performances inspired her with the critical admiration and womanly antipathy she has described in one of her novels. *Shirley* and *Villette* followed each other rapidly; they were received with acclamation; "Currer Bell" became a fixed star in contemporary literature. One vivid streak of sunlight broke across her life at its close; but the frail frame was unused to happiness; it wore grief better; and the rapture of a new life killed her. She died on Eastér Eve, 1855.

I have spoken of *Jane Eyre* elsewhere; and will now only remark of the delightful *Shirley* that it presents a notable contrast to Miss Brontë's other novels. In them there is a profound and frequently overmastering sense of the intense dreariness of existence to certain classes. The creative spirit of poetry and romance breaks at times through the dull and stagnant life; but as a rule it is different; and *Villette*, especially, becomes monotonous from the curb maintained upon the imagination. But *Shirley* is a Holiday of the Heart. It is glad, buoyant, sunshiny. The imagination is liberated, and revels in its liberty. It is the pleasant summer-time, and the worker is idling among the hills. The world of toil and suffering lies behind, but ever so far away. True, it must be again encountered, its problems resolved, its sores probed; the hard and obstinate war again waged manfully; but in the meantime the beck foams and sparkles through the glen; there is sunshine and the noise of bees among the purple harebells; and the leaves in the birken glade dance merrily in the summer wind.

"Surely, surely, slumber is more sweet than toil, the shore
Than labour in the deep mid ocean, wind, and wave, and oar;
Oh, rest ye, brother mariners, we will not wander more."

In *Villette* Miss Brontë returns to the realities of life; but with power more conscious and sustained. She is less absorbed, but more comprehensive. There is the same passionate force; but the horizon is wider.

Villette is by no means a cheerful book; on the contrary, it is often very painful, especially where the central figure—the heroine—is involved. *Her* pain—her tearless pain—is intense and protracted. And in this connection *Villette* may be regarded as an elaborate psychological examination—the anatomy of a powerful but pained intellect—of exuberant emotions watchfully and vigilantly curbed. The character of this woman is peculiar, but drawn with a masterly hand. She *endures* much in a certain Pagan strength, not defiantly, but coldly and without submission. Over her heart and her intellect she exercises an incessant restraint—a restraint whose vigilant activity curbs every feeling, controls every speculation, becomes as it were engrained into her very nature. *She*, at least, will by all means look at the world as it is—a hard, dry, practical world, not wholly devoid of certain compensating elements—and she will not be cajoled into seeing it, or making others see it, under any other light. For herself, she will live honestly upon the earth, and invite or suffer no delusions; strong, composed, self-reliant, sedate in the sustaining sense of independence. But cold and reserved as she may appear, she is not without imagination—rich, even, and affluent as a poet's. This is in a measure, however, the root of her peculiar misery. The dull and cheerless routine of homely life is not in her case relieved and penetrated by the creative intellect, but, on the contrary, acquires through its aid a subtle and sensitive energy to hurt, to afflict, and to torment. Thus she is not always strong; her imagination sometimes becomes loaded and surcharged; but she is always passionately ashamed of weakness. And through all this torture she is very solitary: her heart is very empty; she bears her own burden. There are cheerful hearths, and the pleasant firelight plays on the purple drapery that shuts out the inhospitable night; but none are there who can convey to her the profound sympathy her heart needs pitifully; and so she passes on, pale and unrelenting, into the night. Undoubtedly there is a very subtle, some may say obnoxious, charm in this pale, watchful, lynx-like woman—a charm, certainly, but for

our own part we harbour an ancient prejudice in behalf of "Shirley's" piquant and charming ferocity.

Miss Brontë always wrote earnestly, and in *Villette* she is peremptorily honest. In it she shows no mercy for any of the engaging *ruses* and artifices of life: with her it is something too real, earnest, and even tragic, to be wantonly trifled with, or foolishly disguised. She will therefore tolerate no hypocrisy, however decent or fastidious; and her subdued and direct insight goes at once to the root of the matter. She carries this perhaps too far—it may be she lacks a measure of charity and toleration, not for what is bad — for *that* there must be no toleration — but for what is humanly weak and insufficient. Graham Bretton, for instance, with his light hair and kind heart and pleasant sensitiveness, is ultimately treated with a certain implied contempt; and this solely because he happens to be what God made him, and not something deeper and more devout, the incarnation of another and more vivid kind of goodness, which it is not in his nature to be, and to which he makes no claim. It is patience, fortitude, endurance, the love that has been consecrated by Death and the Grave, the faith that has been tried in fire and mortal pain and temptation,—it is these alone she can utterly admire. We believe she was wrong. But as we recall the solitary woman sitting by the desolate hearthstone, and remember all that she lost and suffered, it is difficult to blame very gravely the occasional harshness and impatience of her language when dealing with men who have been cast in a different mould.

Villette excels Miss Brontë's other fictions in the artistic skill with which the characters are—I use the word advisedly—*developed*. She brings us into contact with certain men and women with whom she wishes to make us acquainted. She does not write a formal biography; there is no elaborate introduction; the characters appear incidentally as the narrative goes on, and by degrees are worked into the heart of the everyday life with which the story is made up. But the dissection goes on patiently all the time—so leisurely and yet so ruthlessly—one homely trait accumulated upon another with such steady, untiring pertinacity, that the man grows upon us, line by line, feature by feature, until his idiosyncrasy is branded upon the brain. Probably the most genuine power is manifested in the

mode in which the interest is shifted from Graham Bretton to the ill-favoured little despot—Paul Emmanuel. No essential change takes place in *their* characters; *they* remain the same; the colours in which they were originally painted were quite faithful, perfectly accurate—not by any means exaggerated for subsequent effect and contrast. It is only that a deeper insight has been gained by *us*, and our original judgment undergoes modification, not because any new or inconsistent element has been introduced, but because, the conditions remaining the same, *we* see further. Leaf after leaf has been unfolded with a cold and impartial hand, until we have been let down into the innermost hearts of the men, and taught by the scrutiny a new sense of their relative worthiness. And Paul Emmanuel is surely a very rich and genuine conception. "The Professor" will ever be associated in our memory with a certain soft and breezy laughter; for though the love he inspires in the heroine is very deep and even pathetic after its kind, yet the whole idea of the man is wrought and worked out in a spirit of joyous and mellow ridicule, that is full of affection, however, and perhaps, at times, closely akin to tears.

M. Heger, of the Brussels *pension*, was probably the original of Paul Emmanuel; but we cannot help believing that the author of *Vanity Fair* was sometimes in Miss Brontë's thoughts when she wrote. Thackeray was, as we have said, after "the Great Duke," her peculiar hero; *their* portraits hung in the parsonage parlour side by side. "And there came up a lion out of Judah!" she exclaimed, when she first saw Lawrence's picture of the giant. To him, moreover, she dedicated *Jane Eyre*, as to one in whom she detected an "intellect profounder and more unique than his contemporaries have yet recognised." When she came to know him her admiration did not abate. "Thackeray is a Titan of mind. His presence and powers impress one deeply in an intellectual sense; I do not see him or know him as a man. All the others are subordinate." Our many-sided satirist was, however, to her, a tantalising study, an enigma she could not quite solve. She admired him, she honoured him, but he puzzled her. She was angry with him because he did not, as she believed, adequately use his great powers; he excited in her ire and sorrow, as well as gratitude and admiration. She rebelled against his judgment; she vehemently combated his conclusions. "Why should he lead so

harassing a life? Why should his mocking tongue so perversely deny the better feelings of his better moods?" To the last she could not quite fathom or compass him; but the little woman did not hesitate to grapple with the Philistine. "The giant sate before me; I was moved to speak to him of some of his shortcomings; one by one the faults came into my head, and one by one I brought them out, and sought some explanation or defence. He did defend himself like a great Turk and heathen: that is to say, the excuses were often worse than the crime itself." How graphic! But she will allow no one else to attack him. "Some people have been in the habit of terming him the second writer of the day; it just depends on himself whether or not these critics shall be justified in their award. He need not be second. God made him second to no man. If I were he I would show myself as I am, not as critics report me; at any rate I would do my best. But Mr Thackeray is easy and indolent, and seldom cares to do his best." There is certainly a reserve of strength in whatever Thackeray puts his hand to; the noble seriousness of the latter half of *The Newcomes*, however, would, I think, have satisfied his vehement kindly little critic. But it might not be. There was no Charlotte Brontë at Haworth when "the Colonel answered 'Adsum.'"

The closing chapters of *Villette* are wonderfully written. They glow with fervid eloquence—they are touched with intense passion. Such rapture is seldom translated into words. The Victor moves along to the solemn music of a national hymn,—the music to which doomed men die bravely,—and the lines flash with sunlight and ring like a minster bell. It is Psyche the soul who speaks, and she raises our minds to the contemplation of a pain which is diviner than the most ecstatic bliss. Of a sudden the dull and weary life has grown radiant; the intensest demand of the woman's soul is satisfied; the swell of a triumphant emotion, in which mingle the blessedness of release from torture and the blessedness of unhoped-for triumph, carries her along. Thus supported misery cannot hurt her; the great anguish which is in store does not whelm her in its flood; she is able like the old martyrs to exclaim through her agony, "O Death, where is thy sting? O Grave, where is thy victory? Death is redeemed by his love. I have conquered because I have loved."

ROBERTSON OF ELLON.

BORN, 1803. DIED, 1860.

THOSE who have occasionally entered the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland during the last thirty years must have been familiar with one quaint and grotesque figure. There is a capital sketch by Richard Doyle — made about the year '48 — which is still to be found in the collections of those who are interested in the curious felicities of caricature. It represents *Punch* telling the members of the House of Commons "to go about their business." The leaders — Russell, Palmerston, Joseph Hume, Cobden, upon the Liberal; Peel, Sir James Graham, Disraeli, Lord George Bentinck, Sibthorpe, upon the Opposition benches—regard their vivacious Mentor with an expression of amused but languid interest. The little gentleman is stamping upon the floor, and gesticulating vehemently. With a slight change of circumstance, the sketch might be taken to represent the General Assembly of the Kirk during one of Professor Robertson's characteristic harangues. Of his figure, the figure of *Punch* could hardly be called a caricature. Hugh Miller said that ships of the line were sometimes cut down to frigates, and that the minister of Ellon was a very large man cut down to less than the middle size. His head was too large for his body; his body was too large for his legs. His limbs, indeed, were as ludicrously out of shape and proportion as the limbs of the Black Dwarf, whom, in fact, he rather resembled. He was as

short, as swarthy, as sinewy, as shrewd, as sarcastic, as the recluse of Mucklestane Moor, and his voice was as prodigiously shrill and powerful. Altogether, the man was one not easily to be forgotten. The coarse white hair, which stood bolt upright; the round red face, with its capacious forehead; the bullet head; the fat swollen hands, clenched, and working unconsciously as he proceeded with his argument; the strong north-country accent; the harsh voice, which grated on the ear like the cry of a land-rail, sometimes sinking into a muffled whisper, and sometimes rising into a shriek as startling as the scream of a railway-whistle,—produced a most singular impression. The orator, so far as externals went, might have been readily mistaken for a Buchan farmer, or a Highland drover. While in repose, the drooping under lip indicated weariness or pain, but the eye was bright and penetrating, and watchful. From the eye alone, indeed, was it possible for a stranger to learn that this misshapen body harboured a dauntless soul, and a peculiarly subtle and inquisitive intellect. Perhaps it was still more difficult for those who did not know him to believe that this tortuous reasoner, this brusque, intricately ingenious, sharply ironical, hard-hitting controversialist was warmed by a love strong as Melancthon's, was animated by a faith fervent as Luther's, was at heart one of the meekest, most tender, gentle, and long-suffering of men. When Robertson wrote of "the quickening and burning spirit of light and love struggling to unearth itself," he as nearly as possible described the conditions under which he endeavoured to accomplish the work which had been allotted to him, and which he cheerfully and steadfastly undertook.

The character of this parish minister was one that could not fail to interest those who had the opportunity of studying it. Robertson's was a singularly open, ingenuous, teachable mind; ardent, busy, and inquisitive. He could not well help being a Calvinist, but he was no bigot. He was profoundly religious, but never fanatical. There was no narrowness in his creed. When in Aberdeen, he drew up a series of remarkable "resolutions." A certain place is paved with good intentions, but Robertson's resolutions were worked into his life, and form a truthful commentary on his career. "Although I consider it a sacred duty," he says in the twelfth, "which I owe to God, to allow no consideration of authority, however high, which does

not alter my convictions, to interfere with opinions which I have coolly and deliberately formed, yet it shall ever be a principal object of my care to keep my ears open to the reception of truth; to behave towards those who entertain sentiments different from my own with the utmost temperance and modesty; to venerate the hoary head of age, and to weigh well its sage counsels before I commit myself by action in opposition to them; *and above all, to guard against the too prevalent error of representing those who differ from me as sinning against their own consciences, by maintaining opinions which, although they may appear to me to be alike unreasonable and pernicious, may, for aught I can positively show to the contrary, be honestly professed by the people by whom they are advocated.*" Humble, and yet thoroughly independent, loving truth intensely, and yet never speaking an evil word, nor thinking a bitter thought of an adversary, Robertson stands almost alone on the field of theological controversy. And this combination of elements seldom found in union, is characteristic of his mental structure throughout. He loved the people, and identified himself with their interests, yet he could not become an ecclesiastical demagogue. His temper was characteristically shrewd and wary, yet, in certain aspects, he might be called a mystic. Crabbe and Coleridge were his favourite poets; and in his own character he united homely sagacity with vague, obscure, and somewhat Utopian aspirations. "Life is more than logic," he used to say, "and the understanding but deals with the surface of the human being." He united, moreover, an ardent zeal with a rare and admirable temperance. His faith was fervent, yet his views were moderate and liberal. He once rose in the Assembly, and assured his astonished brethren that he approved of the grant to Maynooth. "I am not prepared," he said, "to admit that the consequences of the Catholic Emancipation Bill have been pernicious. I know that there are disturbances in Ireland; but when I look back to the progress of Protestantism and civilisation, I see that the vessel of our own Protestant Church was rocked amid many storms. I know that when men come forward, keenly maintaining political rights, they are necessarily learning something; and when in addition to political power we give them education, we do all that, in present circumstances, under Providence, we are permitted to do to bring them forward in the scale of intelligence and civilisation."

Those only who are familiar with the intense repugnance to Popery which prevails among the lower classes and the religious bodies in Scotland, will be able to estimate aright the intrepidity which avowed, and the intellectual fairness and honesty of judgment which, in spite of hostile associations, contrived to arrive at such an opinion.

It was frequently said that Robertson was inconsistent; that he could not be trusted. The accusation in one sense was deserved: the bigots and zealots of ecclesiastical politics could not depend upon him. His intellect was too subtle, too inquisitive, too cautious to enable him to become an effective partisan. He would not wilfully blind his eyes—he saw on every side of a question—and he refused to believe that black was white, or that white was black, at the bidding of any party. Hugh Miller said that Robertson of Ellon might have led a mob; but the remark showed an imperfect comprehension of his character. No man was ever less suited to lead a mob, either of people or of priests. He had indeed a great and noble zeal for truth, and purity, and honesty, and uprightness, —a zeal which, like Jackson's, might have animated an army; but the subtlety of his intellect disqualified him for popular rule. His subjects would have deposed him in a week. Even his warmest admirers must admit that, while the frankest and most transparent honesty characterised his moral nature, his mental processes were involved and intricate, not unfrequently perplexing and enigmatical. It cannot be denied, however, that, when at his best, he was a great and solid reasoner. "I have observed," Benjamin Franklin says, "that men of good sense seldom fall into a disputatious turn of conversation, except lawyers, university men, and, generally, men of all sorts *who have been bred at Edinburgh.*" The observation might have been made more general; and Robertson, like most of his countrymen, keenly relished an argument. His conversation was argumentative: his sermons—even those he addressed to the Ellon ploughmen—were copiously argumentative; and his speeches in Synod and Assembly were uncouth masses of argument, of prolonged and ingenious reasoning. Yet he united with this intensely logical habit, "this contentious and wrangling turn," as Franklin calls it, a fervid power of appeal, and no mean declamatory ability.

Robertson was deficient in that buoyancy of temperament

which has enabled so many eminent statesmen and lawyers to take work easily. His intellect was too grave and concentrated. He was restless and nervously anxious. In his latter years especially, when the spring was giving way, his labours seemed literally to bow him down. The languid and drooping expression of his face and figure indicated a mind of which the elasticity was gone; yet his temper was naturally sanguine, and even to the last he preserved a freshness and occasional gaiety of feeling. He was keenly interested in many subjects besides that which he had made his own—mechanical inventions, political economy, the currency, educational and parliamentary reform. He tried costly experiments upon his *glebe*. He was among the earliest agricultural reformers who, appropriating the scientific labours of Liebig, applied dissolved bones to the soil of Great Britain. A few months before his death he asked his colleague, Professor Kelland, to organise a class for the prosecution of the higher branches of mathematics, the study of which he was anxious to resume. In one of his latest letters, written from the banks of Lochleven, he speaks like a schoolboy of "the elevation of feeling I have more than once enjoyed in finding *a wild duck's nest.*"

Such a career, though not perhaps the career of a man of first-rate powers, deserves to be recorded. For there was undoubtedly something eminently true and heroic in this man—so unselfish, so simple, so zealous, so pure-hearted. And the ungainliness of his presence, the quaintness of his gestures, the involutions and perplexities of his logic, though they might be ridiculed, could only be ridiculed in a spirit of love,—like Miss Brontë's ridicule of Paul Emmanuel, which is very tender, and at times closely akin to tears. Nay, his tortuous mental processes, his intellectual hesitations, and compromises, and retreats, served only to bring into clearer relief the steadfast purity, the untarnished rectitude, the supreme honesty and intrepidity of his moral nature. His enemies, if he has any, may say perhaps that he sometimes reasoned like a Jesuit; but no stain of meanness nor of baseness rests anywhere upon that pure and blameless life.

ROBERT LEE.

BORN, 1804. DIED, 1868.

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AGAINST the spirit of intolerance in its different forms—democratic excitement, Puritanic rigour, Calvinistic dogma—Dr Lee, both as minister of Greyfriars, and as Professor of Biblical Criticism in the University, waged a constant war, and it is this warfare which gives to the last twenty or thirty years of his life an almost poetic unity and completeness. So far as I can gather from his biography, Robert Lee when he entered the Church had not studied very closely its theoretic or speculative side. He was a soldier in the Church militant, who regarded doctors and philosophers, visionaries and dreamers, with a somewhat scornful eye. But as he lived on, there gradually grew upon him the conviction that there was something greater than good works. The severe majesty of TRUTH surprised him at his evangelistic labours, as she has surprised so many of the finest natures. Truth, simple, absolute, unconditioned, was to be thenceforth the sole mistress whom he served. He had to emancipate his own mind, he had to emancipate the minds of the clergy and laity around him, from whatever restraints, devised by ignorance, error, or superstition, prevented him and them from attaining the truth. A perilous service! For such service how was he armed—what were his moral and intellectual qualifications?

Though he delighted in the intellectual excitement of conflict, Dr Lee was not naturally a combative man. He kept away from the Church courts as long as he decently could. But circumstances were too strong for him, and he was forced latterly to occupy a prominent position in the controversial

arena. There can be no doubt, however, that he liked public speaking, and that he found his true vocation in debate. He had the temperament of the orator,—the presence of an audience raised and stimulated his faculties. Having heard most of the great speakers of the present day, my impression is that he was hardly excelled by any of them. He was not a very ready or flexible writer; he did not work freely pen in hand. Even when he prepared a speech he was not at his best (during preparation some of the sparkle and brilliancy seeming to evaporate); it was in instant, incisive reply that he shone. At such times his mind worked with amazing readiness and rapidity; his wit was bright, his logic keen, his language pure and nervous. Most men make their best hits when the opportunity has passed, when they have had leisure to frame the crushing sarcasm or to polish the telling repartee; whereas Dr Lee was able to single out the weak point in the enemy's argument in an instantaneous instinctive sort of way. Other men lose their heads entirely when they find themselves in presence of hostile listeners; but Dr Lee's faculties were all in finest working order when with a few brief notes before him, hastily scribbled on the back of a letter, he rose to reply to the arguments of a triumphant majority. This logical rapidity was probably connected with his delicate sensitiveness. Any blunder or blemish in an argument *jarred* upon him,—grated against some fine, critical nerve in his nature which (so far as its owner's comfort was involved) had been left rather too much exposed to the keen air.

Yet, ardent and sensitive as Dr Lee's nature was, he displayed in public great intellectual coolness and resource. He held himself well in hand. The ineffable contempt which he entertained for many of his adversaries may have partly accounted for his composure, yet it implied something more than scorn. The truth is that, though his temper was sanguine, his intellect was sedate, contemplative, speculative. The winds and the waves of controversy could not reach the innermost sanctuary of his soul.

The language in which his speeches were composed was eminently felicitous. His command of words was inexhaustible, yet in their use he was dainty and fastidious, and if not satisfied with the sentence as originally turned, he did not hesitate (as his hearers must recollect) to repeat it in a form

more to his mind. The written words of such a man—diaries, sermons, letters, even reported speeches—must of course very imperfectly represent him. His influence was in a great degree personal, and incapable of being transmitted to those at a distance. He was a really witty speaker; but his wit vanishes in the reports. The most impressive passages in his sermons (which were never violent nor rhetorical) were the unwritten passages.

Dr Lee was sympathetic and catholic in most of his tastes; yet at times he manifested a marked impatience of discussion which did not directly interest him. He did not care much for works of imagination or humour: though brilliantly witty himself, he loved grave books; light amusing literature rather teased him. "I am evermore convinced," he remarks, "of the soundness of Aristotle's maxim, that the only subjects worthy of the serious consideration of a rational being are politics and religion: all else is secondary." Politics and religion! —whatever lay outside these high, serious objects of thought failed to attract him, whereas the dullest treatise on government could be keenly relished.

Dr Lee, it is almost needless to add, was animated by a most intrepid spirit. Of him it may be truly said that he never feared the face of man. He was often left quite alone; but his courage never deserted him. What he deemed to be truth (more especially if unpopular truth) needed to be proclaimed at any cost! Yet he was a politic man,—so politic, indeed, that he was sometimes accused of concealment and unworthy *finesse*. The accusation rests on a misunderstanding of his character. He was a leader, not a demagogue. He preferred the art of the statesman to the passion of the fanatic. Ill-regulated enthusiasm was repugnant to his tolerant and reasonable nature. Moderation—the right balance of all the faculties—was what he mainly aimed at.

But over and above his fairness, reasonableness, moderation, Dr Lee had great serious qualities of heart and intellect. The notion that he was at best only a sharp, supple, adroit, ecclesiastical politician is an essentially false one. It used to be said by his enemies that he was flippant, that he was irreverent, that he spoke of the mysteries of religion without due respect. He was irreverent, no doubt, of the mere accidents of religion. But in a high sense no man was ever more truly devout,—no man, that

is, ever realised more vividly the dependence of this outward visible life on an unseen spiritual life. He never pretended, indeed, that he had reached a state of ecstatic conviction. The present was very mysterious, the future was very dark, all explanations were more or less tentative. He looked forward to being reunited with the children who had been taken from him, but it was scarcely with joyful hope. His mind was too intensely critical not to appreciate all the immense perplexities of the Hereafter. He trusted that he and those who had been dear to him might meet again; he prayed to God almost passionately that he might see them face to face in the kingdom of heaven. But that kingdom was very far off—was a distant abstraction; death, the open grave, the closed eyes and the folded hands of those whom he had loved with a gay and chivalrous devotion, were tremendous realities. Such a mind so tried might have sunk into absolute unbelief but for one unconquerable conviction,—there was a righteous King and Father in heaven. The Fatherhood of God was to him the anchor of faith, and he realised the relation with singular and uncommon distinctness. Dr Lee's biographer[1] has published a good many extracts from his private diaries, interesting in many ways—most interesting, perhaps, as manifesting in an altogether irrefutable way the intensely devotional habit of his mind. Day by day, and night after night, there is habitual, simple, unaffected appeal to God his Father. He confesses himself, lays bare his whole soul, his sins and shortcomings, his hopes and sorrows, to his Maker. Many of his hearers must recollect the unwritten passages in his sermons, when, quitting the paper that lay before him, he would break forth into noble and unpremeditated eloquence. They must have felt at such times that this was a man who could rise, who *had* risen, into intimate communion with the unseen spiritual world, and who knew as a fact that his life was upheld and guided by a just, merciful, and righteous Being.

Dr Lee's domestic life was eminently engaging. All the rich genial activities of an elastic nature were constantly enjoyed by his family and friends. A charming youthfulness of feeling was one of his most winning characteristics. To the

[1] The eminent and accomplished Dr Story of Rosneath,—now one of the leaders of the liberal party in the Church.

end he was full of life and buoyant vitality—so full that it was difficult to realise that he was growing old—and he continued to anticipate his summer holiday with more than boyish zest and glee. In his home circle he was bright and gay and eager; the combative aspect of his character was there unknown, except in the form of genial fun or witty paradox. He had a great faculty of attaching people to him, from the youngest to the oldest, from the highest in the land to the humblest. He delighted in children, and they delighted in him. The little sketch of his relations with the venerable Miss Napier of Merchiston, is one of the most pleasing which his biographer reproduces. For the old doorkeeper of the Greyfriars Church his pastor had always ready a kindly and cheerful word of recognition. The frail old man seemed sadly shaken when, on that bleak Sunday forenoon in March, he brought me the news that Dr Lee was dead; and next day, or the day thereafter, I heard that he himself was dead, —dying verily of a broken heart, as I can believe.

The domestic circle indeed, was often invaded: death deprived him within a few years of most of those whom he loved best. Yet there was an irrepressible spring in his nature. He bent his head and wept over many a grave the tears which come from men who are at once strong and tender. Yet he was never quite unmanned. He quickly put his grief aside in some silent, secret, sacred corner of his heart, and returned with what seemed the old vigorous alacrity to the conflict which was to end only with life. But though we did not know it then, we know now that those multiplied bereavements (combined with public discouragements) were secretly undermining his constitution, slowly but surely draining the fountain of life.

Such was the Dr Lee that we knew—a truly devout man, a loyal and indefatigable friend, a most admirable teacher and preacher, an incisive reasoner and thinker, a great controversialist. It was inevitable that such a man should leave many enemies behind him; but even his enemies will admit that when he died, a lofty, ardent, and generous spirit passed away from among us,—a man who enunciated what he believed to be the truth with fearless frankness and a rare intrepidity, but whose heart was tender as a woman's, and in whose soul no base, nor mean, nor evil thing lodged.

WILLIAM EDMONDSTOUNE AYTOUN.

BORN, 1813. DIED, 1865.

—o—

TO us loitering somewhat sadly, by the bleak rocks, and the white surges, and underneath the grey rain-clouds of the misty northern sea,—but why should we be unwilling to return thanks for the blessings which have been so plentifully bestowed upon us? This has been a gorgeous summer[1] even in *Ultima Thule*,—the year has strewn roses and welcomes upon every hand. The sun rose up in May as a bridegroom rises to meet his bride; through all the months of summer he strode lustily along—a royal progress. Even in early July the fields were white unto harvest; in August (while we perspired profusely among the heather), red-bodiced, blue-petticoated gleaners were at their work behind the yellow stooks. Then came September,—not the sharp, bracing, frosty month, to which we are used, but a September of almost tropical severity, when it was hard work to beat the open stubbles, and mortal knicker-bockers refused to wade through turnips whose tops were like the cabbages in Brobdingnag. And now the heart of the blue October sea beats softly as a child's breath: the sands are white, and pearly, and sun-dried; the lustrous sea-gull sleeps upon its rock; the boys are paddling in the waves yet warm with summer; and—save for dim rumours of pestilence which this fervid passionate season has borne hither and thither upon its wings—there is peace in all our borders. Very peaceful yet are the fisher races that line our shores, as they drag the scaly herring from their nets; not yet awhile does the stormy and

[1] 1865.

sullen grandeur of winter enter into their lives to make them almost poetic; not, yet, as we gaze on this tranquil summer-haunted sea, does the truthful pathos and intensity of the homely old song come home to us:—

> "Buy my caller herrin',
> Ye may ca' them vulgar fairin';
> Wives and mithers, maist despairin',
> Ca' them lives o' men."

There are rumours of pestilence, and not quite unclouded has the brilliant summer been to some of us. One of our dearest and truest friends has passed away in his manhood. In August, in pleasant Morayshire, William Aytoun died. He had often talked of failing health; but even round his infirmities he cast the light of his humour, and at such times we hardly held that he was in earnest. The event has proved that he judged more truly than we did; and, knowing what we now know, it is with a strong feeling of admiration that we recall the constant kindliness, gentleness, and cheerfulness of a nature that must have been often sorely tried by physical depression and suffering. Aytoun was a poet and humorist. As a poet he did not belong to the first order—scarcely perhaps to the second—but there is life, fire, energy, and animation in his ballads, and they quicken the pulse as few modern ballads quicken it. If in his poetry we occasionally detect a note that does not ring quite true, he was unquestionably a true humorist. And in his humour, if anywhere in his nature, the imagination awakes. There are passages in *Firmilian* which contain more genuine poetry than is to be found in any of his serious poems. He was most in earnest when at play. He was a laughing philosopher, who could join in the laugh that was sometimes raised against himself. This absence of seriousness detracts from the value of his graver work; he is a vehement Cavalier, who does not quite believe in the Stuarts: a bigoted Tory, who rather suspects that Lord Eldon is a bit of a humbug: a sentimental poet with a merry twinkle in his eye. But whenever he abandons himself to the spirit of mockery,—a spirit founded on a very sound, if somewhat limited, critical insight,—the full power of his genius is warmed into life. He feels that he is on firm ground: he does not fear to give the reins to his imagination: and at such seasons he is not merely a wit, a mocker, a satirist, a caricaturist,—he is a poet as well.

LORD NEAVES.

BORN, 1800. DIED, 1876.

THE death of Lord Neaves is a calamity to Scotland, and especially to Edinburgh. He was one of the last links which bound the Edinburgh of to-day to the greater Edinburgh of the past. He had taken part in the conflicts of the gods. He had known Scott and Jeffrey, Cockburn and Brougham; he had been the trusted ally of Wilson and Lockhart; he had lived in close friendship with Moir, and Ferrier, and Aytoun, and the later contributors to *Blackwood*. He had been an ingenious and persuasive advocate; he was till the day of his death (for he died in harness) eminent and successful as a judge. He was a cultivated man of letters. His acquaintance with classical literature was close and accurate. The humorous songs and finished trifles which flowed so freely from his pen rank with those of *Bon Gaultier*. He had a genuine relish for scientific research, and the members of the Royal Society will lose in Lord Neaves one of their most active and genial associates. In Edinburgh society he was supremely popular. He had come of late to be its central figure. Pleasant and affable to all with whom he was brought into contact, in domestic life he was one of the kindest-hearted of men. Such a man cannot pass away without leaving a great blank in the community, which loved him for his lively wit, his gay wisdom, and his goodness.

Charles Neaves was by education and natural aptitude a lawyer. He was profoundly versed in the practice and principles of law. There was a *thoroughness* in his legal training

and learning which is every day becoming more rare. He had made himself an accomplished jurist before he devoted himself to the practical work of his profession. His intellect was well fitted to deal with the nice distinctions, based no doubt upon legal principle (derived from the civil law and the great civilians) which prevail in the law of Scotland. He was a casuist in the highest sense of the word—a lawyer who brought a rare subtlety of mind to bear upon the involved and intricate problems which jurisprudence undertakes to adjust and systematise. But his subtlety was controlled by an admirable common-sense. He was too shrewd and too witty to permit his ingenuity to get the better of his judgment. As an adviser, as a chamber counsel, he could thus be entirely trusted. He cannot, perhaps, be called a great advocate in the sense in which Lord Justice-General Inglis was a great advocate. His *physique* was against him — his voice was hardly powerful enough to convince a jury of farmers or shopkeepers. Even the fun with which he often enlivened his speeches was somewhat too fine for their apprehension. But in a case of real legal difficulty, his thorough knowledge, his keen grasp of principle, his nice discrimination, his flashes of witty common-sense, always proved of true service to his client. He acquired an immense practice before he left the bar, and it was a practice of the kind which lawyers of a high class most value. He was undoubtedly a great power on the bench. He was sometimes, it must be admitted, too rapid in his deductions, too discursive in his observations, too incisive in his logical fence for a slow or timid advocate. But he never lost temper, and no counsel, however timid or tiresome, had reason to complain that he had been treated with brusqueness or rudeness by Lord Neaves. There was no malice, indeed, in his frequent interruptions—they were merely the natural expression of an intellect always on the alert, and of an irrepressible activity of mind. His written judgments are constantly quoted as authoritative and weighty expositions of the law. Having mastered every point in a case (for he was never inattentive nor slovenly), he brought his store of assorted precedent and legal principle to guide him to a just conclusion. The argument is invariably keen and ingenious, and the language pure and delicately weighed—language characteristic of the judge who was not merely a lawyer but a scholar and a man of letters.

Thoroughly accomplished as a jurist, and making the study of law his serious and foremost business in life, the exuberant vitality of Lord Neaves's mind overflowed in many channels. He believed that the intellect of the lawyer was aided and not embarrassed by the cultivation of art and letters, of science and scientific intercourse. The fellows of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, the members of the British Association and of the Social Science Association, were familiar with the spare and attenuated figure—with the keen face and the keener sense of the versatile Scottish judge. Lord Neaves was a fluent penman, and he wrote with admirable directness and true literary grace. His humorous songs are among the best in the language. A few of them have been collected and published—many of the most racy, however, live only in manuscript copies and the memories of his friends. He loved the classics, and his acquaintance with some of the more obscure writers in classical literature was extensive and unusual. His little volume on the Greek Anthology—published the other day by his friend Mr Blackwood—is widely known, and has been warmly commended by critics, who are inclined to believe that, since the days of George Buchanan, no Scotsman has mastered the Latin grammar.

Lord Neaves was to the last delightful in society. He had fine musical taste, and he sang his own songs and the songs of his friends with capital effect. He was a first-rate talker—his stock of anecdote was inexhaustible, and his good-humour invincible. No one ever saw him moody, querulous, or "out of sorts." He was always pleasant, always conversible, always interested. He never varied—he was as courteous to a young lad from the country as to the greatest big-wig in law, or art, or literature; and his hospitality was unbounded. All this was the fruit of an immense kindliness of heart and geniality of temper. He was a "Liberal" in the right sense of that much-abused word—liberal from true culture and wide sympathy. There was nothing of the ascetic about Charles Neaves; but, on the other hand, for whatever was really noble and worthy in religion and life he had heartfelt admiration—an almost chivalrous reverence. He could look forward to the future with the equanimity of the good man who is not unduly depressed nor unduly elated; and he met death with the same simplicity of unassuming piety and Christian confidence.

JOHN HILL BURTON.

BORN, 1809. DIED, 1881.

THE preceding article[1] is the last which our old and dear friend Mr Burton wrote. It had not been revised by him when he died; and it is in consequence more or less patchy and unfinished. Yet to us it is not without a distinct interest and charm of its own, for it proves that the "old tramp," as he delighted to call himself, retained to the end much of the sprightly sense and vigour and unwearied interest in men and books and outdoor life which made him the delightful companion that he was. He may be said, indeed, with almost literal exactness, to have died pen in hand. His death took place on the Wednesday afternoon, and this is the record of his last days. "Both on Tuesday morning and Wednesday morning he insisted on having writing things given him in bed, and on Tuesday morning he wrote half a page of large paper on the connection between the Greek war and the revival of the culture of Greek literature; he meant it as a *hook* on which to hang a dissertation in the 'Ellice-book.'[2] On Wednesday morning he wrote but half a line, when he grew 'too tired' to write. The few words might either belong to the 'Ellice-book' or to prison matters. Six hours later he was gone."

[1] The article entitled "Hints for an Autumnal Ramble," from the pen of Mr Burton, appeared in *Blackwood's Magazine*, September 1881.

[2] At the time of his death Mr Burton was engaged in editing the correspondence of the late Edward Ellice.

John Hill Burton was born at Aberdeen on 22d August 1809. He died at Edinburgh on 10th August 1881. He came of gentlefolk;—his father was an officer in the 94th Regiment, his mother one of the Patons of Grandhome—a good Aberdeenshire stock. He was educated at Marischal College—the famous college of the Keiths, to which Dugald Dalgetty was proud to belong. He was called to the Scottish bar in 1831. From 1831 to 1881—a period of half a century—he worked probably as hard as any man of his time. Even when "on the tramp" his pen was never idle for a day. Politics, law, theology, history, geology, biography, botany, bibliography,—he tried them all, and achieved something noticeable in each. His *Manual of the Law of Scotland* was for long an authority in the schools. His treatise on political economy is about as good as anything of the kind can be—transparently lucid and logical. The *Book-Hunter* is one of the books—quaint, original, racy, idiomatic, unique—which takes its place on the shelf where the *Anatomie of Melancholy* and the *Religio Medici* are found. But from all this "fine confused feeding" (as the Scotchman said of his sheep's-head) he turned habitually and instinctively to his own country and its history. Saving David Laing only, no man knew so much of the devious and obscure byways of early Scottish life as disclosed in the old sermons and the old chap-books and the old records which are preserved in the Advocates' Library and the Register House of the northern capital. His first public essays in this direction were more or less tentative and experimental—brief biographical sketches of distinguished or notorious Scotchmen. His *Life of David Hume*, indeed, has been the storehouse to which all subsequent biographers have turned. "A most competent authority," says Professor Huxley, in his brilliant and remarkable monograph of the great philosopher, "Mr John Hill Burton, on whose valuable *Life of Hume*, I need not say, I have drawn freely for the materials of the present sketch." But it was not until he had settled himself seriously to the great work of his life—the History of the Northern Kingdom from the earliest times to the last Jacobite rising—that his really admirable qualities as a writer manifested themselves. With all its defects and shortcomings, his History is undoubtedly one of the most considerable works of a half-century which has been fertile in famous histories. It may be said without

exaggeration that in this work, for the first time, an exact and scientific method of investigation was brought to bear systematically on the myths of our earlier annals, and *that* with a shrewdness of insight, a variety of interest, and a liveliness of style, that are as rare as they are attractive.

The degree of LL.D. was conferred upon Mr Burton by the Universities of Edinburgh and Aberdeen, and that of D.C.L. by the University of Oxford. He was appointed Historiographer-Royal of Scotland through the good offices of his friend Edward Gordon, the Lord Advocate, by the Tory Administration of 1867. Though a Whig by conviction and training, he was essentially a moderate man, and for many years he had ceased to take any very active interest in the political fortunes of a party which had grown strange to him.

It would be out of place, writing within a week of Mr Burton's death, to attempt to put on record any elaborate or deliberate estimate of his life and work; but there are one or two characteristic traits of our friend which may be briefly noted before the freshness of recollection is lost. The figures even of those we knew best quickly grow shadowy when they leave us to go over to the majority—a majority which, as we get up in life, seems to grow every day so much bigger than it used to be!

There was a good deal of the Bohemian in Burton. He was ill at ease when in full dress; he liked space and air; he was an inveterate wanderer—never happier than when tramping across the country-side, or camping among the heather. He did not care to become the mouthpiece of any clique or coterie. He valued his independence and his right to think for himself. And he was a most intrepid thinker. So long as he felt he was in the right, it did not matter to him what weight of authority might be arrayed against him. He brushed it aside—without scorn or contempt indeed, but with a quiet indifference that was even more effective in the long-run. There was indeed a singular incapacity for resentment or anger or rancour in Burton's nature; he was absolutely free from jealousy, as well as from the other vices which a literary life is sometimes supposed to breed. One never heard him utter a harsh or unkindly word of a brother writer; and his appreciation of excellence was generous and unstinted. He was in every respect one of the most tolerant and catholic-hearted of men. Yet his tolerance did not proceed from coldness or indifference; for

meanness, or baseness, or deliberate malice could sting him on occasion into sharp protest.

The alacrity and alertness of Burton's gait were characteristic of his mind. To the last he retained an almost boyish buoyancy both of body and mind. His spare and weather-beaten frame was sustained by an amazing vitality. The gaunt and attenuated figure, with the habitual stoop, which passed you at express speed, turning neither to right nor to left—the hat which possibly had seen better days, thrown far back upon the head; the black surtout, which had been cut without any very close acquaintance on the part of the tailor with the angularities of the form it was to cover, streaming behind—might excite a passing smile; but we all knew that it was a fine, manly, independent, sincere, honourable soul that was lodged in this somewhat shabby tabernacle; and the incongruities were quickly forgotten.

Burton's vagrant and erratic tastes may have been partly due to the unsettled life he led as a child,—he had twice, as he used to say, crossed the Bay of Biscay before he was weaned. (He was born in the stirring times of the Peninsular War, and his mother accompanied her husband and his regiment to Spain.) His literary bent was also decided at an early period—he had begun to print and publish with Joseph Robertson and others before he left the University. That band of Aberdeen students had a distinct individuality, and idiosyncrasies of their own—shrewd, diligent, thrifty, strenuous, they cultivated literature on a little oatmeal. They did not sacrifice to the graces, but their rough-and-ready mode of making acquaintance with life seems to have succeeded fairly well. All these early experiences are very visible in the great work by which Burton will be remembered. It is the work of a man of immense industry and immense common-sense. He has little or no imagination; but his strong tenacious grasp of the past has seldom been surpassed. His realistic method, his power of intense and patient observation (though it wants the central fire of Carlyle), is always persuasive and often impressive. We do not think that he was fair to Mary Stuart; but it is difficult to find the flaw in that close, unimpassioned argument. There is a want of directness, no doubt, in his method of presentation: in many places the book is commentary rather than narrative,—there being only an oblique reference to the incidents on

which the comment is made, and the commentary itself being apt to meander discursively, like De Quincey's, into those unfrequented byways of history which he delighted to explore. In one respect he never fails—his brief descriptions of the scenes where battles were fought or intrigues hatched are always admirable. He knew every inch of Scottish ground; and before he began his *Queen Anne* he had followed Marlborough step by step from his earliest to his latest battle-field. He wrote with remarkable facility, if not with eminent precision. Yet his style, though often loose and inexact, has an idiomatic vigour, a rough-and-ready directness, a simple and colloquial ease, which to the jaded appetite is often as good as a tonic.

Altogether he was a man whose memory will be cherished most by those who knew him best — a man without guile, generous, sweet-tempered, honourable, incapable of meanness, who hated shams and pretences of every sort, and lived with singular simplicity (in an age from which simplicity has been banished), a pure, honest, laborious, useful life.

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